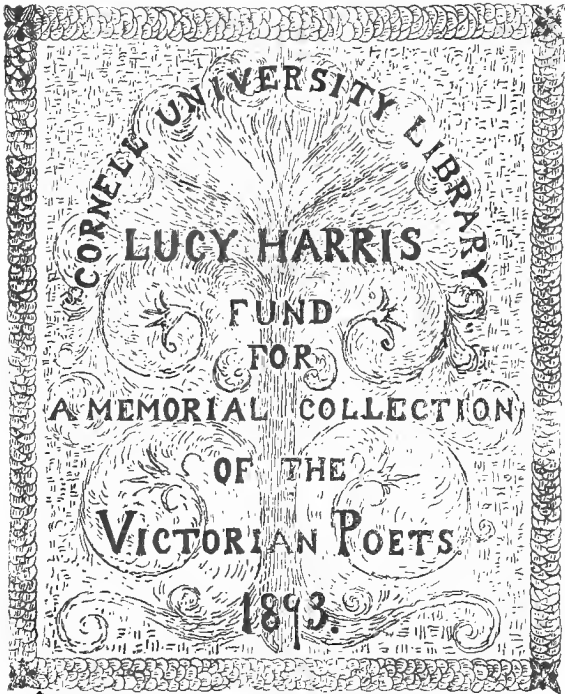


IDYLLS LEGENDS
AND LYRICS

A. GARLAND MEARS



A.182999

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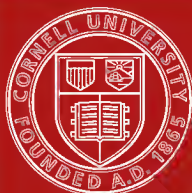
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IDYLLS, LEGENDS
AND
LYRICS

IDYLLS, LEGENDS

AND

LYRICS

BY

A. GARLAND MEARS
=

LONDON

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1890

A.182999

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P R E F A C E



THE chief thought that possesses an author when launching forth his work on the sea of the world's favour, is, whether it will float gallantly along the current, bearing its burden of the golden grain of instruction ; the pleasant fruit of romance ; or the music of poesy to the homes of the people around, or will his barque be shattered against the rocks of dispraise, or be permitted to sink into the quick-sands of neglect.

It is with this feeling I launch my little shallop on the ocean, laden, not with science or philosophy, or the studied phrases of the polished poet, but with the simple music of the love-song, or old love-story.

The object of music is to yield pleasure to the mind ; the design of poetry is the same ; it should

appeal either to the imagination or to the emotions. Its true object is not attained when it becomes chiefly the vehicle for philosophical or metaphysical instruction, reaching only the reasoning faculties.

I do not attempt those deeps of erudition : nevertheless, in the perusal of the legends something may be learned of old-time manners, and the thought of our ancestors ; and in the idylls the pictures portrayed of human life and of human love I trust will prove pleasurable contemplation to the reader.

No one likes listening to a long symphony heralding a song ; or wearying speech before a lecture, or a lengthy preface to a book ; therefore I will not tire the reader with further argument for the *raison d'être* of this work.

THE AUTHOR.

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ILAMEA

A DRAMATIC IDYLL

ILAMEA

A DRAMATIC IDYLL

ILAMEA

SEE, how the sun now dips his glorious rays
In yonder crystal lake, and changes its
Pellucid face to sheet of molten gold !
How grand and beautiful his state, to sit
Enthroned on high, far into distant space,
And know that life in all its varied forms
Throughout the universe subsists upon
His smiles !

COUNT

Now, rather watch the fleecy clouds, which weave
And interweave with one another, like
Fair soul with soul commingling close, that
Seek no new condition for continuance

Of bliss, but sweet propinquity.

Fair lady, even so would life near thee

Be one long dream of joy. Thou fill'st the space

Encircling thee with influence divine,

That gives my soul a strange new element

On which to live.

Ilamea, I love thee ; chide me not,

My sweet, for Love is peremptory—prompt,

And will bide no hiding. Why should I try

To put on some disguise ? Thou knowest full well

In sweetest thralldom I am daily held,

And bright the moments speed when thou art near.

How quickly time hath fled since errand of

My own brought me to Rome ! When just returned

From roaming distant lands, Fate sent me here.

While on my proper business, oft I heard

Of the beautiful Ilamea ; she

As talented as beautiful, as chaste

As either. Then good Fortune smiled ; I met

This queen of women, her I made my friend ;

Friendship hath ripened into love, yes, love

All strong, abiding, fervent, pure, to last

A long eternity.

[*Count kneels.*]

Mine is no passion born of mere desire,
Because thou art so fair. Ripe Womanhood
Becomes thee, who so full of knowledge art,
And versed in works of lettered heroes great,
Thyself no less. And I have studied well
The deep imaginings of thine own pen,
And there reflected shines the beauty of
Thy soul. Nay, blush not thus, I know not how
I should express a thousandth part of all
My thoughts concerning thee. Can little babe
To its fond mother tell the reason why
It clings so closely, frets that it may lie
Upon her bosom soft ?
Ah, no ! it is mere instinct at the first ;
It hath no power of thought or speech ; its cries
Are Nature's eloquence. Even so, unused
To framing language suited to my thought,—
In such a case as this,—I needs must plead
An infant's helplessness, and throw myself
Upon thy mercy. Know, a cause so new
And strange as this unutterable joy,
This gradual change—completion of myself—
This absorption of another soul in mine,
Is inexpressible, and utterance fails ;

I did exist before, but now I LIVE,
For Love hath made Ilamea mine own !

ILAMEA

[She motions him to rise.]

Oh, say not so, my lord, and cease to plead
Thy suit. I must not—dare not listen it.
On me the sun of Love may never shine ;
Know then, nor love, nor wedded bliss, nor aught
Of happiness can ever be for me.
Henceforward I must tread my path alone ;
'Tis vain to say thou lovest me ; if 'twere
Now possible to give a thousand times
More love to me than what thou sayest,
I could not take it.

COUNT

This surely is a jest, Ilamea !
'Tis the cruel coquetry of thy sex
That's bubbling up within thee ! Yet I thought
Thee far beyond such trifling. Cultured, clear
Thy mind ; thy soul all perfect—beautiful,

And free from petty thought. Most true thy
heart,
And good, its motions governed by pure love.

Now tell me hath another gained thy love ?
What is this mystery—what hidest thou ?
Is it honourable to treat me thus ?
Oh, surely thou hast seen how my poor soul
Hath been wrapt up in thee ! If thou but moved,
Mine eyes would follow as if magnetised.
All other women's beauty faded where
Thou wert. Thy voice breathed music to my
soul ;
When thou didst sing a sweet romance for me,
Where Love told some pathetic, tender tale,
Thy dear voice trembled ; thy white bosom heaved
If once thine eyes met mine. Impossible !
Thou canst love none but me.

ILAMEA

It is impossible to love thee not ;
'Tis even as thou sayest.
My lord, I'm in a great dilemma now,

For all the weary years of my young life
Must be gone through in lonely solitude,
And all my natural affections quenched ;
For Honour says I needs must pluck thee from
My heart, and cast thee out.

Oh, Holy Mother, how can I do this ?

How can I make this cruel, cruel wrench ?

'Twixt Love and Duty—rather should be said

'Twixt Love and Law—there comes a struggle
great.

My lord, I am not free ; I wear the yoke

Of marriage—bonds that only Death relieves.

Ten years ago I was a happy girl,

Although an orphan ; placed all safe 'twas thought

In quiet convent school, therein to stay

In strict seclusion till I was of age.

My liberty attained, I would be free

To choose the veil or enter marriage state

With full consent of my two guardians.

'Twas known throughout the convent I was rich ;

The same was talked of in the village too ;

But of the will and testament, exact

Provisions no one knew, save these old men—

A priest and layman. Now, our convent stood
Hard by the village—quiet, grey, and old,
Secluded and embowered within tall trees,
And high stone walls encircling these.

Ah, those were happy days ! To me the nuns
Appeared like angels pure ; they thought of naught
But God and Jesu's Virgin Mother. Thus,
Their love of Heaven to prove, they gave them-
selves

To teach and train us children. Oft I stood,
And gazing upwards to the vault of heaven
I wondered if the angels there our nuns
Resembled aught. The painted pictures of
Sweet saints had wings, and harps of gold, but
these

Were 'tired in darkest garb, as if our world
Were type of death, and sin, and hell, or all.

Anear the village dwelt one Carlos, gay
And profligate, yet handsome, tall, well-made.
His means all dissipated, he was urged
By strong necessity to find a mode of livelihood.
He sought my hand that he might get my gold ;
A low confederate of his did wait

Upon us girls. She whispered in mine ears
How grand a thing to gain a gallant's love.
Tempted by her and him, and teased, and pressed,
At length I did give way and fled ; a priest
As vile as he then made us man and wife.
But fifteen summers had sped o'er my head
When that villain base decoyed me thus.
Oh, what a wretched life he led me then !
Completely baffled, foiled, when he had learned
His marriage brought no wealth (without consent
The whole was lost ; the convent gained my lands),
Then how he raved, and swore like madman wild,
And made my life a sea of misery.

I had no friends. Shut out from all the world
From early childhood, I knew no pitying soul
To whom I could appeal. He hated me.
A woman base as he held all his heart,
And daily urged him on to leave me. I
Had hoped our little babe would, when the time
Was come, his hard heart melt.
One day—'tis graven on my brain with fire—
He came no more. We lived alone, we two :
Our simple meal was spread, of which I would

Not taste till his return. I filled the place
Of wife, and thrall—even I, the heiress of.
Fair Italy's fairest lands. No handmaid now
To wait upon my will. He knew full well
Mine hour I looked for, day by day, but yet
He did desert me.

In my solitude, still watching for him,
The pains of travail overtook me straight.
That long night I lay wrestling with my pain,
With none to help. (The memory of it makes
My whole frame shudder.)

Then, in my dreadful agony, I prayed
That I might die. The anguish of my soul
Exceeded many times the travail-pains.
'Twas like a spell of hell that awful night,
My mind and frame with torture torn, and soon
My strength was spent.

Then I remembered that another life
Might claim my care—that I must live for one
Who struggled now for life ; and so I braved
For its dear sake the terrors of that night.
Oh, how I longed for day ; that some stray soul
Might haply touch the latch and bring me aid !
When morning came a little child, to whom

I oft gave alms and cheerful words, peeped in.
What joy! She ran all fleetly to a house—
The nearest one—and thus my life was saved.
But, ah, that spark of life was quenched which I
Had looked to light the utter darkness of
My home, unblessed by one small ray of love!
That gift of God to cheer my desert-path
Was lost: the babe, so strong erstwhile within my
womb,

In its unaided struggles for its life
Was slain, and with it gone my dream of love.
How my hot soul in strong rebellion rose,
And in my heart I thought that God took heed
Of naught: that cruel wrong its rampant course
Would run for ever here!
Then utter weakness held me down; I lay
For weeks 'twixt life and death, all cold and white.

When I revived, and hue of health came back
To my wan cheeks, I vowed a solemn vow
In deepest bitterness of soul that I
Had done with him for ever. Rumour said
His paramour with him had fled away.
I cast aside his ring: I would not own

His name. I left the place. I told my tale
To my lay-guardian, who in pity gave
Me portion of my fortune. I came here
To Rome, and gave myself to work, and hard
I studied daily. In the course of time
My writings brought me much renown.

When I attained full womanhood, and came
Of age, I pleaded for my fortune then ;
The king the hand of justice forced to make
The priests disgorge my wealth. This attained,
I had no end of suitors. Vain their wish !
I closed my doors 'gainst all intruders ; few
Intimates I made, and secluded dwelt.

I heard that in another hemisphere
My husband wandered lawless—wild,
Entirely lost to me. I know not where he is,
Nor whether he be dead, or living, now.
'Tis strange that Providence should watch so well
O'er wretches such as he : they seldom meet
Untimely end, but live to make us feel
That laws which govern the moral world
Are past interpreting.

I have no more to tell. In Friendship's guise
Thou cam'st to me, and cheered my solitude ;
'Twas thus that thou didst force the citadel
Of my proud heart, and made thyself
Its conqueror.

The circumstances of our life, how strange
They twist and turn ! One moment ask we
For a thing, the next we do refuse it.
An hour ago I longed to see thy face,
And, now, thine absence I must needs entreat.
These wretched contradictions now place
Me under hard conditions.
I willingly would give my life for thee,
But cannot yield mine honour.

COUNT

Oh, dearest, think what thy resolve doth mean
To me—thyself ?
It means the wreckage of two lives which thou
May'st save. No longer dost thou duty owe
To monster vile, whom legal contract calls
Thy husband. Get thee writing of divorce ;
'Tis soon accomplished ; and rid thyself

Of such base creature.
A covetous heart like his would burn to live
With thee again if wind of rumour brought
Him tidings of thy good condition.

ILAMEA

If once he came to Italy again,
'Twere not so easy to discover me.
The name I bear hath been assumed for this
Sole purpose, having no remedy. All
The tribe of learned lawyers say I have
No case, as I hold proof of naught :
'Tis but too true. That he hath left me for
A space, but shows desertion.

Our Holy Church forbids to be annulled
A marriage where the fault is venial, light.
'Tis naught to mar a woman's life, it seems,
If she be only wife ; the marriage vow
Doth cover all iniquity.

How bitter doth the heart become when thought
Reverts to bygone wrong ! Bygone ! alas,

It hath grown now an ever-living wrong !
An ever-present misery !
The Church's theory is good, and wise,
And very beautiful ; for marriage should
Be sacred, indissoluble. The fault
Must lie where this is desecrated.

COUNT

Yea, truly, for a world of perfect beings,
This doctrine would be excellent.

ILAMEA

Now go, and let the widest earth divide
Us twain : yet know, each time thy life-pulse beats,
My heart gives answering motion.

COUNT

Like a beautiful star hast thou shone bright
Before mine eyes, and then retreated far
Above the heavens, never to come again.
Or, as some goddess sweet, too pure for sphere
Like this, thou'rt here and then away again

To thine ethereal home. Ilamea,
Thou taughtest me to love in manner that
My deepest dreams could give no picture. Why
Has Fate thus drawn me hither, making me
Her sport? I ask, why taught thou me to love?

ILAMEA

And dost thou say 'twas I who taught thee Love?
Methinks the lesson first was given by *thee*.
But what is this philosophy of love?
Now, let us reason. Was either taught at all?

Who taught the lark to soar up to the clouds,
And in their bosom pour his happy song?
Who taught the ocean in softly swelling waves
To kiss the glitt'ring shore, while making low
And melancholy music with sad voice?

Who taught the gentle zephyrs to caress
The new-born roses shyly bursting forth,
While warm soft rays of sunshine pure
Expand their lovely petals to the kiss?

Who taught the dew to kiss the lily's cheek,
And delicately leave a tear-drop there,
To show the soft, sweet tenderness of love ?

Why all this strange attraction ? 'Tis Nature's law
Which irresistibly impels, and leads
With forces so unutterably strong,
And yet so hid,—so wrapped in joy, concealed—
That whence it comes we nothing know, nor why,
We only know it is that power called Love.

Oh, mighty monitor ! oh, mystic power,
That rulest, teachest ev'ry human heart,
Whatever be its outer case, or form,
'Tis insignificant ! The coarsest churl
Beneath thy happy influence and mild
Forgets his rudeness : instant greatest change
Takes place, and he is gentle, thoughtful, kind.
The cold philosopher, who naught believes
Save what to him is measurably sure,
And who, with proud disdain, and lofty smile,
Doth scorn existence of a spirit-world :
He sees no soul in man ; no God above ;
No Heaven. To him eternity but means

The space of time the sun will glowing pour
His glorious rays upon the earth, and all
Is darkness after : man is surely doomed
To blank annihilation.

Yet only mark
How changed his words when strongly moved by
love ?

Materialistic forms of speech to him
Are cold, unmeaning, empty—void.
For now a hidden force bursts forth in strength,
And lights upon him as a cloven tongue,
For God himself descends, and leaves on him
His spirit, baptizing him with FIRE !

And lovely woman, shy, retiring, proud,
Doth melt to softest tenderness when Love
Holds sway within her bosom ; while ev'ry nerve
In new and thrilling ecstasy is moved,
And quiv'ring, trembles at thy mystic touch.

Her very soul—no longer hers—goes out
To meet that other with such strong desire
That their two souls, like pair of liquid streams,

Might join as one ; united, onward flow
Beneath the varying shadows of long years,
And thus through all eternity glide on.

Or, longs their two existences might grow,
And blend together, like sev'ral coloured rays
All merged in one, do straightway form a light
Of glittering white, whose beauty fills the earth.

Ah, yes, Love comes to ev'ry one alike,
Unerring finds his way to ev'ry heart,
And on each various character outpours
Such strange and subtle influence ; such change
Effects upon the mind and course of men,
We can but look, and wonder.

Say'st thou yet

I taught thee love, when thou dost know full well
I fain would break the bonds that bind me strong
To thee ? I fain from me would cast afar
The chains invisible surrounding me,
And making me their prisoner. The more
I struggle with my bonds, the more I'm bound ;
And yet it is captivity so sweet,

A thralldom so delicious, that at times
I long for liberty no more, and ask,
And only ask, to live for Love and *Thee*.

COUNT

And must be wrenched apart such ties as these ?
Is it the will of Him,—who liberal gave
To highest, noblest part of His own work
Such beautiful conception of that which
Makes His earth like unto Heaven—to close
Love's purest channels, and repress the soul's
Most tender impulses ?
If Love, my sweet, forbidden be, at least
Let us be friends ; and we'll begin anew
The gentle intercourse, and kindly thought
Which opened our acquaintance at the first.

ILAMEA

No, no, it cannot be, for who can rule
His heart ? 'Tis very true that Friendship may
Oft ripen into Love, but never Love
Will turn again to Friendship. Cold its light,

And pale when set against the fire of Love.
Compare the rushlight's glimmer to the warm,
Effulgent rays of Heaven's bounteous sun,
And mark the difference!

Even such is Love to Friendship.

Yet, stay awhile, and let me hear thee tell
A little of thy history. What came
To thee, when thou didst wander in those wilds,
And pathless lands where men do strive for gold ?

COUNT

As thou dost bid me, dear, I must obey.
I would not touch a topic such as this
Of mine own will. Thy tender heart would melt
At pictures of such misery as those
I witnessed daily. I have seen poor men
Drop down in sheer exhaustion on the road
From hunger and fatigue, with none to help,
And left to die in solitude.
Just picture, now, some lonely man who strove
To find his way to gold-fields, distant more
Than length of Italy thrice o'er ; all spent

The poor remains of his small substance, first,
In buying tools which soon were cast away
To ease the strain of such exertion.

His only food the leaves from off the trees, or
shrubs,
Which bore no nourishment ; and long before
His journey was accomplished, Nature sank
Exhausted.

The piteous sight would make me stop, and
fetch
Some water from the spring to cool his thirst,
And then, unwilling I pursued my way
Lest long delay might bring me sim'lar fate.

ILAMEA

How couldst thou bring thyself to turn thy back
Upon those wretched creatures ; thou wert rich,
And could command all help ! Oh, why didst thou
Not try to render better aid ?
Ah, me, most foolish questions, now, I ask !

COUNT

What use is wealth in such a case as this ?
These lonely places have no mart for food,
So far from habitation or abode
Of men.

I came across a set of ruffians once,
Who quarrelling among themselves did wound
Their own companion.
'Twas one against a number—most unfair.
I rushed upon them, striking right and left,
And succoured the poor fellow ; then to place
Of nearest refuge I conveyed him quick,
And through the long night watches tended him.
A burning fever coursed throughout his frame,
Effect of wounds most desp'rate—deep.
When morning broke he knew not where he lay,
Or who it was that stood beside his couch.
He took me for a woman : ' Beatrice !
Beatrice ! ' he called, then muttered something
else ;
Anon, in his delirium wild, he changed
The name to Martha ! 'Twas most strange to hear

First Beatrice, then Martha ! Martha !
How hard to lie upon a tortured couch,
The hot blood parching ev'ry pore ; the mind
Its balance gone, all racked with phrenzied
 thought,
And feel no gentle hand of love is nigh—
No woman's tenderness forestalling all
Our wants !
I pictured in my mind some gentle wife
In Italy's fair land awaiting his
Return, he desolate, dying far away.
I stayed with him three days, in hopes he would
Survive his troubles. Business urged me strong
To make no more delay. Good fortune sent
Antonio, a fellow-countryman,
To whom I gave the wounded man in charge ;
I left him gold and bade him not to spare
Good pains to bring the man to life and health.

ILAMEA

Didst thou inquire of thy poor patient, when
Recovered somewhat, whom this Beatrice was ?
And Martha—hateful name—of whom he spake ?

COUNT

It was not meet to trouble him with speech
At such a time. I know that doctors urge
Necessity of silence to keep the patient calm ;
Yet this I learnt that Beatrice was his wife.

ILAMEA

His wife ! Describe to me the wounded man :
Was he quite tall and straight, with piercing eyes,
And Roman nose, and lips all large and full,
Of sensual mould, and hair of darkest hue ?

COUNT

Now truly thou hast drawn his portrait well.
He had beneath his curls a little scar
Just o'er his temple, seeming remnant of
Old wound.

ILAMEA

My God ! It is my husband ! Then thou hast
Even saved his life—thou, his would-be rival !

Ah, surely Providence hath some strange modes
Of working out its methods. Thus 'twas given
To thee to succour him, who was of all
God's creatures most in thy way.

COUNT

Thy husband ! Oh, it surely cannot be !
And have I thus bestowed upon a wretch as he
My pity, love, and care ? A heartless cur,
Who innocence deceived, and vows despised !
Without one shred of honour ? This is misery
All heaped on misery ; a cup brimful !

ILAMEA

Cease to reproach thyself for thy good act,
Nor think that it was meet to take on thee
The punishment of one whom God himself
Was scourging. Wisdom infinite decreed
That thou shouldst save him for some purpose
wise,
Beneficent. 'Tis all inscrutable.
Yet know we that however strange appears

God's ways to us, He surely in the end
Will justify Himself, and show His laws
To be most excellent.
Humanity is an attribute divine,
Which lifts man from the baser part
Of all creation, proving his sonship,
And title to the Fatherhood of God.
And when a sudden impulse made thee fly
To help the stranger in his dire distress,
Thou only didst obey the dictates of
That innate sense of right, transmitted thee
From out the Heart of God.

COUNT

[He sees a man approaching them.]

By all the saints in heaven this surely is
A season of surprises! Antonio!
My good Antonio, whence comest thou?
I left thee in the Austral wilds to tend
That lawless vagabond. Come near and give
Account of what thou'st done. Now, doth he live?
Oh, say if thou didst nurse him back to life,
And health. Be quick—I urge thee to be quick!

Recount to this fair lady and myself
All that thou knowest.

ANTONIO

My lord, I did your bidding ; long I watched
And tended him both day and night. Oh, blame
Me not ; 'twas ne'er through lack of care that he
Made no recovery—'twas his bad luck.
For days he raved in strong delirium,
And when this passed away he knew that death
Pressed hard upon him. Oft I watched the tears
All silent trickle down his face when of
A fair young wife he thought—one Beatrice.
There was no priest to grant him solace in
His deep extremity. He said his sins
Could never be absolved by God ; that he
Was past redemption. Solemnly he bade
Me seek his wife, and in the village of
Arbosso find his Beatrice, whom years
Agone he basely had deserted. From
A quiet convent school he stole her, in
Good hopes her wealth would then become his prey.
He loved one Martha, with her fled away ;

Then she deserted him in turn. At length
He wandered with a lawless band who lived
By plunder. In the end they turned against
Him, grudging him fair share of booty. On
That night you succoured him, they thought to slay
Him outright.

He made me swear, before the breath of life
Had left his quivering lips, that I
Would carry to his wife his deep, heart-felt
Repentance ; the gage of which was this
Fair missal, bound in gold, with jewelled clasp,
Belonging to his wife. In deepest straits
'Twas ever kept as token of her worth.
See here, in fair handwriting is the name
Now writ upon it !
He died beseeching God to grant *her* good,
Although He did deny him mercy.

COUNT

And so he lived to learn that deeds of wrong
Do breed a fearful progeny !
Even so the mighty God doth make the law
Of retribution just, to follow out its course.

ILAMEA

Say, rather he was guided unaware
By God of mercy, who thus made him shed
The penitential tear. And now we know
There is no soul upon this earth which is
All vile ; none unredeemable. The breath
God breathed on man in Eden carries still
A remnant of the fragrance all divine,
Which with his first faint inspiration came,
Bearing still the germ of His sweet purity.
The story of my husband's fading hours
From out my heart hath taken all the sting—
The bitterness which time hath ne'er effaced.

[*She weeps.*]

Now turn aside, I pray, and let me have
Communion with my soul. I feel as if
A lifetime I have lived in one short hour.

COUNT

Upon my bosom, dearest, lay thy troubled head,
And heart to heart we'll live anew our life :

For now I claim the right to comfort thee.
When sorrow's cloud doth rise, my sympathy
Will lighten it. Even as the sun doth break
Through thickest mist, and sheds his rays around,
So shall my love now chase away thy tears.

As flowers fragrant odours breathe to air,
My love shall rise to thee as incense sweet.
Or, as the petals of a rose enclose
The vital part, even so will I surround,
And guard thee from the faintest breath
That seeks thy harm. Thus in the casket of
My heart I'll keep thee safe, my precious gem.

Now, is every barrier broken down,
And Love is Lord of all! From thy dear lips
Of ruby let me take my first fond kiss,
Wherein methinks doth lie the essence sweet,
The summit and realisation of
Deliciousness of love.

HONORIA'S LOVE
AND OTHER SONNETS

HONORIA'S LOVE

INTRODUCTION

OF all the various methods adopted by poets in giving a love-story, no one, as far as I am aware, has attempted such a task in sonnets which are the outcome of the lady's feelings.

Innumerable sonnets have been addressed by the lover to his mistress ; but few have undertaken in this form of verse the expression of the lady's sentiments under similar conditions.

In 'Honorias Love' are depicted the several emotions of the mind when under the influence of love ; each sonnet expressing a separate phase of that passion which is admitted to be the strongest of all human passions.

The baser feelings of jealousy and vexation—the usual accompaniments of an ill-fated love—are not treated here, for Honorias is above her sex in

generosity and gentleness. Inspired by the deepest passion, her heart knows no reproach. Even at the moment of her desertion she shows no scorn towards her vacillating lover, whose easy, voluptuous nature refuses to combat with the obstructions which circumstances have placed in the way of their union.

Owing to the form of the verse, the eighteen sonnets are less a love-story than an exposition of the emotions.

I

LOVE'S ENTRANCE

OH, Kingly Love, when first thou didst enthrall
My soul in thy sweet bonds, I hardly knew
Thy presence : filled with joy, what could I do
But gaze upon thy face, and at thy call
Give willing ear ; then straight before thee fall,
In meekness yielding loving homage, true.
What sum of bliss wrapped up in moments few !
Life's sweetest mystery is made my all.

Beneath thy flowing robes, where none could see,
Were chains invisible ; then didst thou take
And lace elysian unseen spells o'er me.
What boots it that impetuously I make
These struggles? Vain to strive 'gainst thy
decree ;
For Love is life. Life's sweet for Love's dear sake.

II

LOVE AWAKENS THE HEART TO THE
BEAUTIES OF NATURE

OH, how the glorious sunshine fills all breasts
With gentle thoughts ! The soft and balmy air
Now breathes delicious sweetness everywhere :
The fragrance of the new-mown hay contests
With scent of flowers ; and Nature now invests
The earth with beauty, life, and joy : all share
In mutual gladness, for Summer fair
Her longed-for, promised treasures manifests.

The rise and fall of waving corn awakes
Sweet rhythm, as swelling waves of ocean seem
To give the music of the sea, which breaks
In cadence soft. The gentle wind now shakes
The murmuring leaves. Thus willingly we dream,
And listen to the poetry Earth makes.

III

ATTRACTION

WHAT makes me love thee, dear? I cannot tell :
I know 'tis not thy beauty ; nights and days
I, like some first-work painter, fondly gaze
Upon thy face, and scan each feature well ;
Then wond'ring seek to know whence comes the
 spell
That silent sends me to thy side always ;
At times unwilling, I would make delays,
And fain this strange and sweet enchantment
 quell.

The painted picture of a Christ I've seen,
How round his head a halo bright is shown,
As if the beauty of his soul had been
In fair effulgent light outside him thrown :
Thou art not circled by such luminous sheen,
But yet thou hast a radiance all thine own.

IV

LOVE'S MYSTIC POWER

NOW would I closely analyse my mind
Like some philosopher ; fain would I try
To fathom mysteries ; discover why
Thou dost possess such psychic force, and find
If Reason leads me on, or impulse blind,
Or cunning culture of thy mind, that nigh
To thee I'm drawn in loving sympathy,
Like floating sound-waves in the wind.

There seems to me a magnetism strong
Surrounding thee ; as if an aureole
Of subtle influence doth crown thine head,
And overspread thee wholly. Thus, I long
For thy sweet kisses ; while my very soul,
And conscience, heart, and mind by thee are led.

V

LOVE, THE UNIVERSAL LAW

AS atom unto atom firmly lies,
Obeying blindly that great law which makes
Subservient even lifeless matter ; wakes
An energy, a force whose hidden ties
Bind animate or inanimate in wise,
True order. See, the silver cloudlet breaks,
With others interweaves ; thus changed, forsakes
An individual existence, dies.

Wave follows wave in rhythmic lines, and one
By one they lose themselves in close embrace ;
Thus are we twain commingled ; our lives run
In closest sympathy ; we interlace
Our mind's emotions : now there hath begun
Creation new, to which past life gives place.

VI

DEVOTION

IF mine were wealth of worlds, or vast estate,
Or kingly crown of monarchs great, then know,
I, dearest, would on thee all these bestow.
My Prince of Love, I would not hesitate,
Were I a queen, to daily ministrate
So humbly to thy wants, if need be show
How much my love would willingly forego,
Myself extinguishing to make thee great.

Ah, yes, if I the goddess Fortune were,
My gifts on thee I gladly would outpour :
If I possessed the zone of Venus fair
I'd give to thee a form and face e'en more
Enchanting than Apollo's. I would share,
Nay, yield to thee wealth, honour, beauty, power.

VII

DOUBTINGS

ALL brimming over, dearest, with my love to-day,
I knelt upon the grass ; I whispered low,
While closely bending to the flowers that show
The constancy of love, ' Oh, blue eyes, say
If he who gives me love, will love always ? '
I listened, but the leaves that to and fro
Were swinging overhead, then seemed to throw
A melancholy shadow as I lay.

' Oh, hapless one,' then sighing said the wind,
' Thy heart for ever on its love must bide ;
He loves thee not, and thou—well, thou art blind.
Just then, the love-songs to each new-made bride
Were trilled from tree to tree. ' These have divined
The mystery of love ! ' my heart out-sighed.

VIII

LOVE, AN INSPIRATION

WOULD I dethrone thee, idol mine, my king,
If mine eyes ceased to win from thee thy love ;
Or if my voice's music failed to move
Thy soul in sweet accord ; and all I sing,
And all the minstrelsies my heart could bring,
Indifferent still found thee? 'Twould but prove
An incitation deep and strong : above
Love's joys is that of Love's sweet sorrowing.

Ah, if mine eyes had never looked in thine,
Or I had never listened to that tone
Which flowed in soulful words, like rich, red wine
That quickens warm life-currents ; then, not one
Stray thought of passion's poesy were mine ;
For, thou their inspiration, thou alone.

IX

SEPARATION

MUST we two part? Bound as we are? Oh, no!
'Tis sundrance of myself! I would abide
At any cost for ever at thy side.
Oh, must for evermore life's river flow
In sep'rate channels, dried and shrunken go
To limitless eternity's dark tide?
Henceforward must our life-path far divide,
And leave me in unutterable woe?

How chilled the life-stream is that warmly ran
Erstwhile throughout the subtle, unseen ways
Of this my frame! All seems so cold and wan;
Life's warm and roseate hues that met my gaze
Are turned to ice: for in that blow began
The death-in-life to last my length of days.

X

RENUNCIATION

Now go ; I may not strive with this decree
Which doth divide us two. I will not say
I suffer : sound of speech shall not betray
My soul's incessant, tearless agony.
How often lowly on my bended knee,
Or in the occupation of each day,
I sue for my deliverance ; and pray—
' How long, oh, weary heart, is this to be ! '

Yet know, the farthest limits of earth's space
But poor division makes 'twixt thee and me :
The motions of our mind are so allied
That when thou hast a thought it must give place
To mine. 'Tis held by the intensity
Of that soul-chain which space may not divide.

XI

DESPAIR

MY darkness mock not, oh, thou orb of day,
Nor make the world so beautiful and bright,
While heavy clouds of deepest, densest night
Press down my inmost soul. No single ray
Of hope doth pierce the gloom that fills my way ;
Departed is my joy, my life's sunlight.
Like one struck blind the memory of sight
Alone remains ; so light is lost for aye.

Oh, how those light-winged mites of pleasure make
Mine utter joylessness more vivid, plain !
While trilling happy songs they straight awake
All nature to rejoice : the sweet refrain
In times past thrilled each nerve, as bright leaves
shake
In summer wind, or quiver in the rain.

XII

REGRET

WITH what delight the traveller longs to see
The shores of other lands, and eager goes
Upon his way despising ocean foes.
But, weary at last, he longs to be
At rest, and pants for home regretfully.
Thus storm-tossed, heart-sick, longing for repose,
I seek some peaceful shelter which bestows
A share of calm on chastened misery.

The flowery shores of Love I smiling sought
In new-born joy, nor ever stayed to think
'Twas but a lovely mirage that was fraught
With rainbow beauties. Just upon the brink
Of full possession all dissolved to naught,
And in the clouds I watched the vision sink.

XIII

LOVE'S INDESTRUCTIBILITY

THE days have multiplied themselves to years
Since visible reflection of thine eyes
Met mine ; though God propinquity denies,
Still art thou very nigh me. All my tears
Have failed to blot thine image, which appears
Upon the mental retina, defies
Laws physical ; and when I rest or rise
One solitary speech the silence hears.

And this my cry—' Beloved, I love thee still !'
Howe'er I strive iconoclast to be
Mine idol will not shatter. If my will
Could change thy substance, and had power to see
Thee turned to limpid water, then my fill
Of life were given to cast myself in thee.

XIV

LOVE VERSUS REASON

AS prisoner pining in his darkened cell,
And sighs to see the golden, glad'ning light ;
So longs mine hunger'd heart for one short sight
Of thee, mine absent one. Could I compel
Thy presence here, by force of that strong spell
Which essence is and outcome of the might
Of love enchained, and still all infinite,
Would I refrain ? My lonely heart, me tell !

Hath Reason power to move the quickened soul
To do its dictates ? Or doth the lord of all,
Imperious, issue his command, control
All man's emotions ? Make him humble thrall,
And servant to his will ? Love 's not the whole
Of life ; though ofttimes Reason's reign may fall.

XV

THE UNDOING

NOW, how must I unlove thee? I do attest
The task of this unloving can't compare
For easy methods to the loving. Where
The first is full of toil and strange unrest,
Of all things human, 'tis most manifest
The second 's like a slippery downhill snare,
O'er which all blindly stumble unaware ;
Nor wise, nor simple can the fall arrest.

In searching for the way through all book-lore,
I read that 'tis pre-eminently wise
To scan the loved one's faults, and closely dwell
Upon his blemishes, whom we of yore
Thought perfect. But, how vain to thus devise !
Away they melt ! Unloving, love we more.

XVI

PEACE

I HAVE at last the victory achieved—
That victory over Love, beneath whose sway
My hot, rebellious soul could see no way
Of freedom good, nor means to be relieved ;
And all this weary time I had believed
The bondage must endure ; for day by day
My ever-changeful, helpless heart would say—
' Love 's gone at last ! ' Then find itself deceived.

On me a nun-like peace hath now ensued,
Serenely I can think of thy dear name,
And sink each foolish, fond solicitude
In deep oblivion. The past's a dream,
For Love is dead, and buried now for good,
A thousand times I tell myself the same.

XVII

SUBDUED, BUT NOT DEAD

WITHIN my breast a meek submission reigns ;
Unruffled as the stars I see thy face,
Of which I keep the semblance, not a trace
Of those old bygone love-throbs now remains :
Nor is it moved by burning, jealous pains,
That oft in quick succession took their place.
I see thy fair handwriting, in this case
The written page mine eyes no more enchains.

Yet, this I know, if Fate should send thee here,
We must not meet ; there's not a doubt but all
My walls of strong defence would disappear ;
I could not trust my wayward heart this much,
If on mine ears thy deep, soft tones should fall,
Nor neutralise the magnet of thy touch.

XVIII

LOVE NEVER LOST

ALL crushed and broken are those tender flowers
That wilful Hope persisting strewed my way ;
And there before mine eyes Love's rosebuds lay
Blushing, and waiting soft refreshing showers
To ope their petals sweet, in summer hours,
And bask in light and beauty while they may :
But just at brightest bloom they passed away,
And dying perfume breathed amidst their bowers.

The flowers are gone ; their fragrance still remains
All hid within my breast as incense rare ;
Though Love's departed, yet its influence reigns,
And gives more gentle thoughts the soul to share ;
Beneath its gen'rous power the heart attains
A sweetness fair, that else were never there.

TO AMY

ON HER TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY

THIS day hath dawned for thee, my darling sweet,
Which often thou hast longed for in the past ;
Thy childhood's o'er, and thou hast gained at last
Fair womanhood's estate ; for thee replete
With health, and joy, and love ; gifts truly meet
For God's dear children. Now o'er thee is cast
The glory of life's sunshine ; now thou hast
The fragrance of life's flowers at thy feet.

Thy smiling lips breathe sweet content ; thine eyes
Of clearest blue bespeak thy happy thought ;
For in their depth a tender beauty lies,
That e'en we think a glimpse of Heaven is caught,
Drawn as it were from out the far-off skies,
Which makes thy life with love for ever fraught.

TO J. W. S.

ON HIS BIRTHDAY, MARCH 31

WHEN Winter's frosts had safely passed away,
And all his course of storm and tempest run,
Then birds and flowers peeped forth to meet the
sun ;

For Spring-time came with bounding steps to say
Her pleasant mission was to make earth gay ;
And raising fairy wand, she thereupon
Commanded Life to spring, and one by one
The earth disclosed sweet charms each new-born
day.

'Twas thus midst budding trees, and sunshine brave,
The wooing of the birds, the building of each nest,
New-wakened Life to thee a greeting gave,
In mystic music all her love expressed,
Forecast of joys that I would wish thee have,
Thy length of days ; the purest, sweetest, best.

FAITH

YE countless, far-off suns that form a scheme
Unfathomable ; hung above the blue
Of high-vaulted heaven, and sending through
The skies your inextinguishable beam ;
Now say if Heaven and Hell be all a dream,
And but a myth the vast hereafter, too,
Yet ye remain all steady, constant, true,
For ever kept alight by power supreme ?

Is there no God ? If so, then let your light
Now totter ; your empyrean fires go cold ;
No longer glist with scintillation bright,
Ye mysterious spheres of molten gold !
Now let your glory fade, and turn to night,
In darkness all the universe enfold.

THE EVANGELIST

‘GOD IS LOVE’

OH, sweet-voiced messenger, now thou dost go
To spread the olive-branch of peace each day ;
At once rejoicing, pitying ; on thy way
Thou breathest gentle thoughts that surely flow
From out the Fount of God's own love, and glow
With light divine. A mingled two-fold ray
Illumes thy face ; for in thy heart doth stay
A depth of human love most good to know.

Thou dear enthusiast ! Inspired by love
Speed on thy way, and strike the desert stone
Of hardened heart of man ; now gently break
That flinty rock, and by thy sweetness move
To penitential tears. Thy work alone
Will bring thee love—'tis all for 'Love's' dear
sake.

EDAIN

AN ANCIENT LEGEND OF IRELAND

LIST OF IMAGINARY ILLUSTRATIONS

I. Early morning. A beautiful woman (Edain) bathing in a lake, which is surrounded by trees—chiefly willows. In the clear lake is reflected the rosy clouds. Behind the trees stands a man (the king) in an attitude of astonishment, mingled with delight, as he gazes on the maiden.

‘He wandered on until his steps unwittingly drew near
The willow-sheltered lake, where bathed Edain all void of
fear.

With eyes transfixed he stood amazed, and mute
With joy ; for quivered ev’ry nerve with love all absolute.’

II. Edain is crowned the Queen of Erin, and, seated on a golden throne at the king’s right hand, she receives the homage of the nobles.

‘And all the nobles in his court paid homage to her there,
In twofold honour, Erin’s queen, and queen of beauty rare.’

III. The fairy king, disguised as a minstrel, and the King of Tara are seated at a table on which is placed the chess-board. The checkers are made of gold and silver alternately, the angles of which are richly illuminated with precious stones. The Queen Edain is entering the room. The minstrel looks at her, spell-bound with surprise at her extraordinary beauty.

‘The glory of her loveliness
Enraptured all his soul ;
His senses, steeped in joy, no more
Were under his control.’

IV. The royal hall. The banquet over, the guests are standing about in groups, or seated on low benches covered with cloth of gold. The princes of Erin, in flowing hair, are crowned with golden circlets. The queen is seated in her royal chair at the king's right hand, while the minstrel (who is invisible to all others) is singing his love-song in the ears of the queen, and playing softly on his golden harp. The Chief Poet, arrayed in his robes of white, is seated on a dais at the opposite side of the room, surrounded by his train of fifty minstrels, or minor poets.

‘Most beauteous lady, come with me
 To my palace made of gold ;
 Thy bed shall be drooped with diamonds rare
 And glitter with wealth untold.’

V. Beautifully shaped horses, with golden bridles, and shod in silver, are leaping over the high wall the king caused to be erected in order to starve them to death, so as to revenge himself on Midar. The chiefs of Erin running after them, in hopes of catching them for their own use.

‘The horses were of noble blood,
 And leaped their barriers high ;
 Nor bolts, nor bars, nor prison walls
 Could spoil their liberty.’

VI. The king's warriors and workmen are all vigorously engaged in digging down into the hill, situated in the ‘ Sacred Mitte ’ (centre) of Erin.

‘And now the king's brave warriors
 And workmen, one and all,
 With spade and pickaxe bore the earth,
 To reach the palace wall.’

VII. Summer's night. Moonlight. An immense number of fays and fairies are diligently engaged in filling up the pit.

Some are striving to carry stones nearly as big as themselves, while others are filling wheelbarrows ; those nearest the pit are shovelling in the soil. They present a very grotesque appearance.

‘ But daily, as their task went on,
Their labour proved in vain :
As fast as e’er the pit was made,
Each morn ’twas filled again.’

VIII. Fairyland. King Midar’s gardens. Fays and fairies reclining on moss beds, which glitter like emeralds. Fairies wandering in the maze of beautiful avenues. Fountains playing at every turn, showing rainbow hues. Minstrels, dressed in glistening gossamer, with harps, are seated on the branches of noble trees. The whole illuminated by myriads of tiny lights suspended from the branches of the trees. The lamps give out every imaginable colour, the effect on the scene being most gorgeous.

‘ The spirit-music floating from
These sylvan seats above,
Was tuned to poetry divine,
Whose themes were all of love.’

IX. Midar mixes them. Fifty fairies are seen filing out of the castle gate, all exactly alike, and all perfectly resembling the queen.

‘ In dress, and face, and form, all like
The beautiful young queen ;
So nearly they resembled her,
No difference was seen.’

X. The king gazes bewildered at the file of lovely women. At the sound of his voice, Midar’s spell on Edain is broken. She looks at her husband with a countenance lit up with joy.

‘ Her prisoned soul burst through its chains,
And lit with love her eyes,
As gazed she on her husband’s face
In warm and glad surprise.

‘ He knew her by her look of love
And drew her from the crowd,
And kissed her, raised her on his steed,
Then back to Tara rode.’

XI. Fifty warriors have each a maiden mounted on horse-back behind him. To prevent their escape they are strapped to the soldiers’ waist-bands.

‘ Securely fastened to his waist
(A curious cavalcade)
Behind him, mounted on his horse,
Each warrior has his maid.’

XII. Tara’s Gate. The warriors, glancing behind at their prisoners, are utterly amazed to find that they are *non est*. In the distance the fifty fairies are seen melting into mere shadows, which become fainter and fainter.

‘ And when they turned them to alight
At Tara’s palace fair,
Lo, every maid had vanished quite,
And melted into air!’

EDAIN

AN ANCIENT LEGEND OF IRELAND

INTRODUCTION

THE romantic and poetic nature of the Irish may be seen in their beautiful fairy tales, or ancient legends of Erin, where historical events, and fanciful fairy lore are most romantically mingled. It seems as if the very beauty of the country helped to inspire a poetic feeling in its people, and stimulate their imagination ; for every glen and mountain has its own history, each of which is made dear by its association with some national hero who was held in honour in the days of old, when Ireland possessed her own kings and native chiefs.

The annalists of Ireland claim for their country a civilisation extending over a period of three

thousand years. Long before Romulus founded Rome Ireland had her college at Tara, 'where the Druids taught the wisdom of Egypt; the mysteries of Samothrace; and the religion of Tyre.'

The Irish believed, as did most civilised peoples, in a race of beings, partly human, partly supernatural; beings midway between man and the angel. The Persians called these peris, the Greeks demons, and the Irish the Sidhee, or fairies. These latter are said to be very fond of beautiful mortal women, and use their supernatural powers to wile them away to fairyland. This belief has given rise to many a beautiful fairy-tale. The fairies are said to have their palaces beneath the hills and lakes, where they hide all the treasures of the earth. They enjoy perpetual youth, and are unacquainted with death or disease, living a life of pleasure, and revelling in dance, and music and song; nevertheless, they are not perfectly happy, for they know they are doomed at the Day of Judgment to complete annihilation.

In the following verses I have adhered faithfully to the incidents given in the old legend; nevertheless these form but the framework of the story;

for the filling in of the details are partly the work of my own imagination and partly information culled from the best historic sources. In this way I have endeavoured to give a more vivid picture of those ancient times for ever passed away.

EDAIN

'T WAS dawn of day, in his majestic beauty rose
the sun
Behind the ancient hills of Erin. Dewdrops one
by one
Now slowly disappeared ; caught up, absorbed by
every ray
That glinted through the shady glens, filled with
the misty grey
Of Night's dark curtain. Like some beauteous
mirage in the lake,
The purple-tinted clouds appeared to move about,
and break
In myriad forms and shapes. Before the heat of
summer sun
Had spread, and in the early cool, the maid Edain
with none

To see, herself unrobed, and springing in the
glitt'ring sheet

Of limpid water, bathed all free in this secure retreat.

Save the soft clouds none saw the rounded limbs
alternate gleam

With shell-like tint upon the wave, or vanish like
a dream :

Her breasts like two fair doves in gentle palpita-
tion rose

With each lithe motion ; for her silken hair con-
fined all close

Naught of her charms concealed. Th' exquisite
beauty of her race

Was gloriously expressed in ev'ry curve of her
sweet face.

No peri half so fair ; 'twas glimpse of heaven to
see her eyes

Glow with the light of midnight stars set in the
archèd skies.

From Tara's halls the king had wandered forth in
quiet mood,

To list to love-songs of the birds in this sweet
solitude :

To drink the morning air ; to watch the rising sun
soft glow
O'er every dell, or mountain top, or valley far
below ;
He wandered on until his steps unwittingly drew
near
The willow-sheltered lake where bathed Edain all
void of fear.

Then suddenly he stopped and gazed upon that
vision fair,
His heart beat fast and full, and he could scarcely
breathe, nor dare
He move a limb. With eyes transfixed he stood
amazed, and mute
With joy ; for quivered ev'ry nerve with love all
absolute.

He turned him round and fled ; this new-born
feeling quickly brought
Sensations of strange bashfulness. Then back he
came and sought
With swift impatient steps to see this naiad of the
lake

Who held such empire, that he could yield his
kingdom for her sake ;
But, lo ! the maid was gone ; in vain explored he
everywhere ;
The sylvan glens, the shady woods he searched
with anxious care ;
He homeward turned ; perturbed his mind ; with
strong emotion rent ;
' Who was the maid ? How came she there ? ' he
asked with wonderment.

Though parted from her presence there remained
before his sight
The image of Edain, that seemed like some fair
dream of light :
All things to him were changed ; the soothing
sounds of minstrelsy ;
The pleasures of the chase ; of banquetings and
revelry ;
Now lost their charm ; a melancholy man in all
his thought
The king became, without Edain all pleasures
were as naught.

At length the king's decree went forth through all
his wide demesne
That sweet Edain be brought to him, and made
fair Tara's queen ;
Now sate she on a golden throne upon the king's
right hand,
And fame of all her loveliness was spread through-
out the land ;
And all the nobles in his court paid homage to
her there,
In two-fold honour, Erin's queen, and queen of
beauty rare.

King Midar the powerful chief
Of Tuatha-Danann race,¹
Loved far beyond all of his kind
A beauteous woman's face.

¹ It may be somewhat confusing to the reader to find that the Tuatha-de-Dananns (a race of the earliest historic settlers in Ireland) are treated in the legend in the two-fold character of fairy and human being. The following will explain this apparent anomaly. The first historic settlers in Ireland were a pastoral people, called Firbolgs. The next

He longed to look on sweet Edain,
Behold her features rare ;
And see how far a mortal may
Transcendent beauty bear.

'Twas told him she was wondrous fair,
More lovely to the sight
Than any fairy who e'er danced
Upon a beam of light.

Then he disguised him cunningly,
As wandering minstrel dight,
And came to Tara's halls, and sued
For shelter on one night.¹

were the Tuatha-de-Dananns, a large, fair-complexioned and very remarkable race. 'They were warlike, energetic, progressive ; skilled in metal-work ; musical, poetical, acquainted with the healing art, skilled in Druidism, and believed to be adepts in necromancy and magic.' Owing to their superior knowledge the Dananns were credited to possess supernatural powers which in course of time converted them by the imagination of the Irish into fairies. 'From these two races sprang the fairy mythology of Ireland.'

¹ In ancient times it was the custom in Ireland to render hospitality to every bard who demanded it ; for it was held to be a sacred duty for both king and commoner to entertain

No song sang he, no epic gave,
But to the king straightway—
'A game of chess, my sire,' said he,
'I beg of you to play.'

'And who art thou that I should play
A game of chess with thee?'
The king demanded of the bard
A little haughtily.

'Try me, I am a worthy foe,'
The minstrel quick replied;
'I have no check-board,' quoth the king,
Unable to decide.

''Tis in the chamber of the queen,'
Explained he to his guest;
'It is not meet to enter now,
And spoil my lady's rest.'

him. 'A train of fifty minor poets always attended the chief poet, and they were all entertained free of cost where ever they visited throughout Ireland. The Chief Bard was borne on men's shoulders to the palace of the king, and there presented with a rich robe, a chain, and a girdle of gold. Of one bard it is recorded the king gave him in addition, his horse and armour, fifty rings to his hand, one thousand ounces of pure gold, and his chess-board.'

That challenge was given the king,
The Queen Edain soon heard ;
Forthwith she sent the checker-board
To please the stranger-bard.

The checkers were of rich red gold,
And silver, white and fair ;
And every angle was bedecked
With jewels rich and rare.¹

The chessmen were most weird and strange,
For they were deftly wrought
From out the bones of enemies
Who centuries had fought,

¹ A manuscript of the twelfth century contains this description of a royal chess-board :—‘ It was a board of silver and pure gold, and every angle was illuminated with precious stones ; and there was a man-bag of woven brass wire.’ The ancestors of the king to whom this board belonged used chessmen made from the bones of hereditary enemies. A recent writer says—‘ The game of chess was frequently referred to in the old bardic Tales ; and chess seems to have been a favourite pastime with the Irish from the most remote antiquity. The royal chess-board was very costly, and richly decorated.’

With Tara's kings¹ in bitter hate ;
And thus from out the dead
A monument of victory
Their conquerors had made.

Then from her chamber Queen Edain
Came forth her guest to see,
But while she gave him welcome meet,
He trembled visibly.

He gazed with ravished, dazzled eyes
Upon that vision fair ;
The pow'r of utterance had fled,
And speechless he stood there.

¹ Montalembert says—'Almost without interruption, up to 1168, kings, springing from its different branches, exercised in Ireland the supreme monarchy—that is to say, a sort of primacy over the provincial kings, which has been compared to that of metropolitan over-bishops, but which rather recalls the feudal sovereignty of the Salic emperors. Nothing could be more unsettled or stormy than the exercise of this sovereignty. It was incessantly disputed by some vassal king, who generally succeeded by force of arms in robbing the supreme monarch of his crown and life, and replacing him upon the throne of Tara with a tolerable certainty of himself being similarly treated by the son of the dethroned king.'

The glory of her loveliness
Enraptured all his soul ;
His senses steeped in joy, no more
Were under his control.

A strange emotion suddenly
Came o'er the lady too,
She paled, and quivered like a leaf,
Then silently withdrew.

'What are the stakes?' the king inquired,
The minstrel answered free ;—
'Let him who conquers name the prize,
Whatever it may be.'

'Agreed, agreed!' exclaimed the king,
And then the game began ;
To make successful the campaign
He wisely laid his plan ;

All skilfully he played his game ;
With care the pieces moved ;
But played the bard more cunningly,
Who victor final proved.

‘ Now, name the prize ! ’ the good king cried,

‘ The game is surely thine ! ’

‘ The Queen Edain, ’ the bard replied,

‘ I fairly claim as mine ;

‘ Twelve months this day, I ’ll take away

The prize thou didst award. ’

Then suddenly was seen no more

The strange mysterious bard.

The king, aghast at this demand

Beyond all parallel,

Felt sorely straitened ; deep perplexed,

And down his countenance fell.

Then instantly a grey-beard spake,

‘ Thy royal oath was given ;

Thine honour pledged to thy young queen,

Which never may be riven. ’

‘ Yield up Edain ? ’ exclaimed the king ;

‘ I ask the All-Good ’s curse,

If such I do while drop of blood

My frame doth still traverse. ’

The monarch kept a strict account,
Whene'er the day should be,
And gathered round him all his court
To bear him company.

And then he royal banquet made
Upon this fatal day,
And summons sent to vassal kings¹
That none should stay away.

The prince of fair Mommonia, and
Cannocia in the west,
Lagenia and Ultonia, were
Each one an honoured guest.

¹ In ancient times Ireland was governed by a supreme monarch and four vassal kings. The country was divided into provinces, or kingdoms ; to the north Ulster, or Ultonia, to the south Munster, or Mommonia, to the east Leinster, or Lagenia, to the west Connaught, or Cannocia. Over each of these provinces reigned a vassal king who was subject to the supreme monarch. At one time Leinster alone paid a triennial tribute to the King of Tara of cattle to the value of 130,000*l.*, 5,000 ounces of silver, 5,000 cloaks, 5,000 brazen vessels. The supreme king dwelt in and owned a distinct district—the antique ‘Sacred Middle’ of Ireland, represented by the counties of Meath and Westmeath, which surrounded the royal residence of Tara, celebrated in Moore’s ‘Melodies’ : some ruins of the castle still remain.

Beside all these the monarch bade
The minstrel-chief, and suite
Of fifty bards—well-favoured men—
To make the feast complete.

Above the nobles sat the bards
In honourable place,
All gifted men of noble mien
Endowed with every grace.

The minstrel-chief was centre of
This goodly, fair array
Of talent, genius, yet was he
More noble e'en than they.

He sat in state, resplendent in
His robes of purest white,
All clasped with jewelled brooches fair,
That glistened in the light.

To ask him to give song—declaim—
Such privilege none possessed ;
Not e'en the king ; nor nobles high,
Nor prince ; nor honoured guest.

The queen alone, 'twas e'er ordained,
Should choose the epic, glee,
Or song of chivalry and love
At royal revelry.

At times the venerable bard,
When inspiration came,
Would sweep his golden lyre, or pour
His soul in lofty theme.

And while the poet thus declaimed
No sound the silence stirred ;
But all in reverence sate still,
Nor ever uttered word.

And bravely all the chieftains looked
With golden circlets set,
To crown their long and flowing locks
Of brown, or glossy jet.

Antique they were, of classic form,
And wrought all cunningly
In divers ways of workmanship,
Most wonderful to see.

And every chief his jewels prized,
 For in the days of yore
 Their ancestors these diadems
 At war, or banquet wore.¹

The fair Edain was richly tired
 In robes of beauteous sheen ;²
 A costly diadem of gold
 Crowned Tara's lovely queen.

¹ 'Relics of a civilisation three thousand years old may be seen in the Royal Irish Academy. The golden circlets ; the fibulas (brooches) ; torques, bracelets, rings, &c., worn by the ancient are not only costly in value, but often so singularly beautiful in the working out of minute artistic details, that modern art is not merely unable to equal them, but unable to even comprehend how the ancient workers in metals could accomplish works of such delicate, almost microscopic minuteness of finish.'—SIR WILLIAM WILDE.

² At this remote period 'the ladies wore the silken robes and flowing veils of Persia. The native dress was costly and picturesque, and the habits and mode of living of the chiefs and kings splendid and Oriental. The high-born and the wealthy wore tunics of fine linen of immense width, girdled with gold, and with flowing sleeves after the Eastern fashion. The fringed cloak with a hood after the Arab mode was clasped on the shoulders with a golden brooch. Golden circlets of beautiful and classic form confined their long flowing hair, and, crowned with their diadems, the chiefs sat at the banquet, or went forth to war. Sandals on their feet, and bracelets and signet rings, of rich and curious workmanship, completed the costume.'—SIR WILLIAM WILDE.

At every portal, every gate,
A guard full trusty, sure,
Was placed to keep all strangers out,
And make the queen secure.

Around the palace walls were ranged
Three lines of warriors, brave ;
A triple cord of chosen men,
Who swore the queen to save.

Yet, when the hour of midnight came ;
The pleasure at its height ;
And gallant nobles homage paid
To win their ladies bright.

Within the midst of this gay throng
Appeared the bard again,
And no one heard him, save the king
Sing softly to Edain.

No bard so beautiful as he,¹
All glorious his attire ;
While deftly swept he harp of gold,
And glowed his eyes with fire—

¹ Every bard was handsome. 'They were gifted, learned, and beautiful; even genius was not considered

THE MINSTREL'S SONG

‘ MOST beauteous lady come with me
To my palace made of gold ;
Thy bed shall be drooped with diamonds rare,
And glitter with wealth untold.

‘ Delicious nectar from dewy flowers
Shall be given thee all thy days ;
And crimson red are the lover’s lips
That would kiss thee, sweet, always.

‘ And thou shalt sleep on the gentle down
That comes from the butterfly’s wing ;
Thy wine-cup shall be the lily fair ;
Thy lover the Danann King.

enough without beauty to warrant a young man being enrolled in the ranks of the poets. A noble, stately presence was indispensable ; and the poet was required not only to be gifted but handsome. Then, he was promoted through all the grades until he reached the last and highest, called “The Wisdom of the Gods.”

‘ And nightly thou shalt be lulled to sleep
With a soothing, dreamy strain,
And the music floating through the air
Shall come to thy dreams again.

‘ And delicate scent of balmy flowers
Shall o’er thee shed incense sweet,
Culled from the gardens of all the earth,
To render thy joy complete.

‘ And thou shalt be my fairy queen
Endowed with eternal youth,
For ever and aye thy love I’ll be,
If thou wilt be mine in truth.

‘ Then come with me, come, sweet lady mine,
To my palace made of gold,
With ivory floors of creamy white,
All beautiful to behold.’

Thus with his golden harp sang Midar to Edain ;
In low seductive voice he uttered this soft strain ;

Then drew her tenderly from out her royal chair
And pressed her to his heart with none to interfere :
He led her down the hall amidst the courtly throng
His presence none perceived ; none heard his sweet
 love-song :
None save the king, who sat immovable—fast
 bound—
Struck dumb by Midar's spells : as soon as he had
 found
His freedom, then he upraised him, in anger fierce
He bade his horsemen follow ; uttering a curse
Upon the sorcerer, he scoured the country wide ;
'Come back, Edain, Edain !' impetuously he cried ;
The echoes of the hills took up the mournful strain
In seeming mockery replied—'Edain—Edain !'

The monarch message sent to all the kings around,
And bade them kill and slay, and utterly confound
All of the hated Tuatha-de-Danann race,
And leave of all their forts e'en not a single trace ;
And royal Danann steeds should perish in their
 stalls ;
For 'twas the king's command to build up all the
 walls.

The horses were of noble blood
And leaped their barriers high,
Nor bolts, nor bars, nor prison-walls
Could spoil their liberty :¹

Of noble form these fiery steeds,
With golden bridles dight,
Their hoofs with silver gaily shod,
Shone in the bright sunlight.

The chiefs of Erin now forgot
T' obey their king's command,
To find where Midar kept Edain,
And spoil the Danann band ;

To capture for himself a steed
Each chieftain vainly tried ;
To mortal man these would not yield,
But ran the country wide.

¹ It is said that the Tuatha-de-Danann horses were a breed of noble animals found only in ancient Ireland, where they flourished for several centuries : they were distinguished for their beautiful shape, and high mettle. 'The last of this race at the death of its owner refused to submit to a base-born churl ; threw the groom, killing him on the spot, and galloped away. Finally he plunged into the lake and was seen no more.'

The king in hottest anger raged ;
His heart with anguish stirred ;
To see his warriors and chiefs
So disregard his word.

He straightway issued a decree
That the Druid chief who dealt
In spirit lore, should cast a spell,
And find where Midar dwelt.

The Druid over Erin searched ;
His charms cast all around,
For, lo ! the penalty was death
If Midar were not found.

At length it was revealed to him
That Midar's palace bright,
Was hidden deep down in the hill,
In Erin's centre, quite.

At once the king's brave warriors,
And workmen, one and all,
With spade and pickaxe bored the earth
To reach the palace wall.

But daily as their task went on,
Their labour proved in vain,
As fast as e'er the pit was made,
Each morn 'twas filled again.

And now the monarch sorely felt
All baffled in his quest
And sat heart-broken on the hill
Refusing food, or rest.

At midnight on one starry eve
While lonely he stayed there,
He heard a soft mysterious voice
Come floating through the air :

And then 'twas told him how to break
Th' enchanter's wily spell,
And how the pit could sure be made,
And all the work go well.

Oh bravely, bravely sped they on
Until the palace bright
Was seen to glitter through the earth
All in the broad daylight.

And soon they reached the palace gate,
When lo ! they saw a train
Of lovely women filing out,
All like the Queen Edain.

Then, what a gorgeous scene burst forth
Upon their ravished sight,
Enchanting gardens teeming o'er
With every delight !

The turf was velvet to the touch,
And glowed with beauteous sheen,
Like sparkling emeralds glittering fair
In many hues of green.

Delightful flowers of brilliant dye
Filled every gay parterre ;
While balmy odours from sweet shrubs
Were wafted through the air.

Far up the height of noble trees,
And glittering among
Their foliage, were a myriad lights,
Like stars in heaven hung.

Each lamp gleamed with a wondrous fire ;
 (No two alike were there) ;
A multiple of colours shed
 Their lustre ev'rywhere.

No eye before such radiance saw,
 And no one could divine,
What mystery made these tiny lamps
 So constantly to shine.

At every turn a fountain played,
 In thousand colours dight,
Like many rainbows merged in one
 Sweet cloud of beauteous light.

And resting 'neath the spreading trees,
 Or wandering through the maze
Of lovely avenues, were seen
 The fairies, and the fays.

Upon the stately linden trees
 Were scattered here and there,
The fairy minstrels, robed in white
 Of glistening gossamer.

The spirit-music floating from
 These sylvan seats above,
Was tuned to poetry divine,
 Whose themes were all of love.

The perfumed air was parted with
 Delicious melody,
That swept the ear, and filled the soul
 With thrilling ecstasy.

The halls within were soft illumed
 By radiance that was spread
Of myriad diamonds clustering thick
 In branches overhead.

Indignant that these soldiers bold
 Should view his fairy hall,
King Midar caused a thick dark cloud
 To cover over all :

Yet when he saw his conquerors close,
 Their victory to protract,
He fifty beauteous fairies sent
 The warriors to distract.

In dress, and face, and form all like
The beautiful young queen,
So nearly they resembled her,
No difference was seen.

For Midar this enchantment made
In hopes he might retain
The winsome woman whom he loved,
And struggled hard to gain.

The king was sorely puzzled now
When gazed he on the scene,
He could not recognise his wife,
Nor say which was the queen.

Then with the concentrated force
Of love, and wild despair,
In mighty tones his voice cut through
The dense and darkened air.

‘Edain, my love, my life, come forth,
Throw off thine awful yoke ;
Reveal thyself, my joy, my light !’
Thus pleadingly he spoke.

Now, when she heard her husband's voice,
Her heart gave sudden thrill ;
It broke the spell that bound her down,
And held in bonds her will.

Her prisoned soul burst through its chains
And lit with love her eyes,
As gazed she on her husband's face
In warm and glad surprise.

He knew her by her look of love,
And drew her from the crowd,
And kissed her, raised her on his steed,
Then back to Tara rode.

And now the gallant warriors were
Unable to refrain
From much contention 'mongst themselves
Which should a maiden gain.

The sight of so much loveliness
Their souls set all on fire ;
Their hearts were witched by fairy charms,
And burned with strong desire :

But Might asserted now its Right ;
The strongest soon agreed
Each warrior should a maiden take,
And place her on his steed.

Securely fastened to his waist,
(A curious cavalcade)
Behind him, mounted on his horse,
Each gallant had his maid.

But when they turned them to alight
At Tara's palace, fair,
Lo, every maid had vanished quite,
And melted into air !

Though Midar loved fair women well
He ventured ne'er again
To trouble Tara's Halls, or try
To steal the fair Edain.

POEMS IN BLANK VERSE

*THE BURSTING OF 'CONE-
MAUGH LAKE,'*

JOHNSTOWN, U.S., MAY 31, 1889,

IN WHICH 14,000 PERSONS PERISHED. THE DISASTER
TOOK PLACE AT HALF-PAST TWO O'CLOCK, IN EARLY
DAWN.

THE busy town was hushed, and silence reigned
Around, upon that eve of leafy June ;
And sweetly Nature nestled everywhere.
The bird-song hushed, the hum and chirp
Of each wee wingèd thing that flits on earth, through
air
Had ceased ; and weary men who toiled all day,
The labour-sleep full deep and dreamless slept.

In light repose a babe lay on the breast
Of many a tired house-mother. Young Love
came

All decked in pearly robe of rainbow hues
To whisper pæans sweet to maidens fair,
And steep their senses in a new delight.

The restless little children slumb'ring lay
Within their cots, while pleasing dreams
Brought dimpling smiles to play all lightly 'mong
Their roses. Nature, empress first and last
Of all the universe, did then enforce
Her gentle law, and saw that ev'ryone
Of all her various subjects rested.

But, hark ! What is that cannon boom that rends
The air with awful roar, more fiercely than
The concentrated sound of myriads of huge
Field-pieces, belching forth their fire and death ?
Is this artillery of Heaven that bursts
Upon the ear in new and forceful form ?

Now comes the rush of mighty waters—see,
They leap along their course like chargers spurred
To agony, expending all their strength
To compass full destruction of some foe.
Or hungry tigers springing on their prey

They light upon each unresisting cot,
And ev'ry homestead thought so safe erstwhile
Is now submerged within the angry flood.

Then terror strikes at every heart ; it is
As if the mighty ocean broke its bounds,
And now no longer moon-kept thrusts away
Its chains, engulfing all it reaches.

See, riding down the vale in fullest speed,
The horseman brave to give the sleeping town
An instant's warning ; valorous he sped,
The huge flood following, and fronting him
The town. He hears the waters rush, he turns
Him round ; he sees himself pursued
E'en by a mighty moving mountain chain,
Whose huge dimensions gave momentum great.

With pallid face he spurs his steed—' On—on !'
He urges him, ' or else a town is lost !'
But while the words were on his lips, both horse
And rider were to quick destruction whirled.

Now bravely stands one woman at her post,
And sends electric summons to each place,

Within the radius of the waters' course,
To warn them of their danger. 'Save thyself!'
The answering message said ; but still she plied
The needles, while the waters onward came
With giant strength. 'This message is my last !'
She trembling wired ; one moment later rushed
In fullest force the torrent wild, and swept
Away in one vast wave that noble soul.

But her brave deed will live : no hero great
Hath better won his laurels bright, than she
Who willingly laid down her life to save
The many from destruction. Henceforward men
Will say,—' Ah, seldom woman's courage fails
When those she loves are found in danger :'
here
No selfish love inspired her soul, 'twas done
All bravely for the public good ; and in
Long years to come the children shall be told
With quiv'ring lips this woman's gentle deed,
This tale of noble self-devotion.

Now high upon the roof a mother stands
Surrounded by her children ; wond'ring if
Avenging God another deluge sent.

The building swayed and rocked, moved by the
force

Of that mad water-mountain. Suddenly

It tottered over. In the flood herself

And one brave boy now struggled. 'Swim for
life!'

She cried as she upheld him clinging close

To floating thing, which swirled and danced
around.

With blanching cheek and beating heart the boy

Obedied ; then turning his white face to hers—

'Mother,' said he, 'you always told me God

Would keep me safe ; will He protect me *now* ?'

Alas, poor mother, that long ling'ring look

The loving child gave thee is all thou hast

To dream upon ! Now, widowed, childless, 'reft

Of all the seven, weep thine eyes away ;

The light of life from thee for ever fled,

All blighted and extinguished thy heart's joy

In one short moment.

Impelled with awful force the floating wrecks

Of all the hamlets round come riding on

The wave, alive with shivering souls who cling
With death-tight clasp to their unstable aid.
On—on the waters rush with mighty swell,
And soon the town is even with the ground,
And ev'ry habitation as completely wrecked
As if an army vast with vengeful force
Had swept it with great cannon. Onward goes
The flood, which carries now the wreckage of
A town, together with the remnant left of all
A goodly town's inhabitants.

Now mingling with the waters' rush and roar
Are heard the shrieks of terror-stricken souls,
Who cling in wild despair to aught that floats
The frightful current. Snow-white locks of men
Bent with the weight of years, are mingled with
The full rich brown of youth. And childhood's
gold
Is gleaming in the morning sun, that lights
Those cruel waters that last day of May.

All innocent of danger ; void of fear,
A child plays on the floating timber ; laughs
Full merry as he dances down the wave

In all the joy of childhood, happy—free—
In full belief this ride on chance-made craft
Was pleasant sport for dawn of summer's day.

Still rushes on the flood, until the bridge
Is reached ; the wreckage is too vast to pass
Beneath its arches. Suddenly is made
A barrier of piled-up heap of homes
Demolished—shattered—all that goes to make
A goodly town, and clinging to this mass
Are thousands souls who swell the block the bridge
Hath made, and forms one firm stupendous dam.
And thus the coming current losing vent
Falls back upon the town, which now becomes
As deep submerged as ocean bed ; as void
Of human habitation, or the sign
Of human hand as what the sea traverses.

But see ! A flame is flickering through the pile
Against the bridge : it gathers strength—it spreads
All o'er the mass ; and volumes of dense smoke
And tongues of fire are leaping from that heap
In which are wedged a multitude of souls.
Oh, God ! Now hear the shrieks that fill the air ;

The moans of dying in their agony ;
As if a thousand martyrs to the stake
Made fast, were slowly, horribly consumed.

Or has the Earth disclosed at last a Hell,
And in the midst of all the torrent's rush
Belched forth its fierce and fiery fumes
Upon the hapless beings gathered there ?
To flee the torture of this hell, those free
To move their limbs leaped from the writhing mass
To end their torments in the deep dark flood.

.
Abated now the fury of the flood ;
But who shall dare approach that awful pile
Still burning, smould'ring dense? And now no
sound

Doth issue from its depths ; no groans—no cries—
No signs of life ; an awful stillness reigns.
Though hope is lost yet every man hath now
Become a hero. Day by day they struggle on
To free the loved remains from hellish place,
Though naught but ashes, or charred limbs will
meet

Their dazed, dimmed eyes, and sickened hearts.

And this is all
That's left of manhood's strong and stately prime ;
Of womanhood's sweet beauty ! Hoary age,
And tender infancy are mingled in
One mass, and none can say—' She's mine ! ' for all
That goes to make a woman love one man,
Or man to love one woman far above
All other, are now extinguished, and full
Obliterated all life's beauty.

Oh, saddened men, why seek ye your beloved
Among the charred remains that strangely fill
This floating charnel-house ? Shut fast your eyes,
Nor let the hideous vision haunt your sight
Throughout the weary, solitary years
That ye may call your own. Let Memory
Alone, before the mental retina
Bring faces sweet and fair ; whose eyes looked
love
To yours ; whose smiles were as a household sun
Which spreads its warm, refulgent rays around.
Whose souls were as a book all fairly writ
With tender thoughts, and deeds, and all
Those sweet sollicitudes that Love begets

In woman's heart, and leaves to blossom there.
Thus contemplate ; and in the earnest strife
That falls to men who live their lives through-
out
Now bury this Dead Past in deep oblivion.

TO J. F. T.

BIRTHDAY ODE

ONCE more the earth with swift unerring flight
Hath sped her course around her glorious lord,
Who sits enthroned above the Heavens, and sheds
On many worlds his warm effulgent beams :
To each their proper season duly gives,
Bestowing riches, beauty, life on all.

Again the earth is clothed in russet dress,
And Autumn brings its many-shaded hues
Of golden brown ; more beautiful than spring
In all its youthful freshness ; now the heart
Is stirred with aspirations pure and good
By all this wealth of loveliness around.

'Twas thus, dear friend, at such a beauteous time
Thou first didst ope thine eyes, and saw Heaven's
light ;

When Earth breathed poems sweet, and softly
sang
Her mystic songs in every rustling leaf.

Yes, then thou cam'st, all innocent of what
Life means. Thou hadst to learn that even joy
Brings pain. That hid beneath the cup of bliss
There lies some bitter element we hate ;
And fain would we untasted leave those dregs ;
But still no choice is left :—the full, deep draught,
Or none.

 Wrapped in sweet unconsciousness of all
Existence means ; its duties, crosses, joys,
Its vast responsibilities, thou breathed
The breath of life in gentle sleep.
How much unwearied love and care
Have fondly been bestowed on thee since then !
So much its magnitude were all in vain
To realise, until thy time doth come
To lavish pure paternal love on bright
Young hearts. It is a compensating law
Our Mother Nature doth enforce that what
We cost we pay again in full : in turn

We render too that self-forgetting love ;
That patient, true devotion we received.

To what can I compare thy glad, young life
Emerging just on manhood's sober years ?
'Tis like a tree that's now attained fair growth
And covered o'er with scented blossoms sweet
Gives promise sure of richest freight of fruit.

And yet one other simile is here ;
As year by year the tree doth form around
Itself a circle, showing the vital force
Within is ever working out with strong,
Unceasing energy, that first great law
Of Nature : that power inherent, to build—
Construct, and give unto itself such grand
Proportions—such wealth of noble beauty,
So let thine energies be put to high
Pursuits, to elevating deeds : to that
Which cannot fail to give the toiler true
A glad and sweet content.
And may each sep'rate phase of thy career
Bear honourable marks of thy life's work
Which seeing, all can say 'THIS MAN HATH
LIVED !'

APOSTROPHE TO THE OCEAN

OH, surging ocean, wide, and wild, and grand !
An angry despot thou, and harboureth deep
Strong enmity to Earth. Fain wouldst thou rob
Her every treasure. Now, wouldst thou engulf
The glistening beach, anon, the smiling fields :
How many forest wilds hast thou entombed
Since first thou wert begotten ?
In far-off age, while yet the Earth was young,
Thou mad'st a bed for thy tumultuous head,
'Midst spongy reeds as great as forest trees,
And tangled brakes which drew their breath
From rank and humid atmosphere.

Now white with foaming rage in furious storm
Thou fill'st man's heart with apprehension deep ;
Awe-struck, with fascinated gaze he sees
White-crested waves, like thousand monsters huge,

Rush on in quick succession ; gaping wide
With cavernous mouth, to swallow up their prey.

Then terror-struck the white-sailed ship doth flee,
As if she were some closely-hunted hind,
That running blindly on, doth trembling seek
The quiet shelter of some friendly cave.
But long before 'tis reached her eye-balls strained
With longing gaze, are glazed in grim, cold death.
The quiv'ring limbs her great embarrassment
No longer testifies. The fearful strife
Of death-agony is past ; she breathes no more.

Even so the laden ship so fair, and strong
Erstwhile, is now resistless torn by grasp
Of Ocean's arms ; she gasping sinks therein.
No more will gentle zephyrs play within
Her fair white wings.
No more to shores whose odorous breath
Delicious scents the balmy breeze, she'll sail
With graceful mien. The Sea, with envious eye
Hath cruelly despoiled her. Down she sinks
With all her living, breathing treasure closed
Within her.

And thou, oh, Sea, assumeth placid calm,
As if no crime were thine ; like innocence
Thou wearest smooth and happy brow, and trust
Again is given to thy deceitful face.

Now slowly comes the rolling mist all dark
And moist. It is thy heavy breath which fills
The broad expanse. In volumes huge and dank
It spreads itself, o'er earth, through air, and like
A dark unsightly veil it hideth all
Things fair.

The numerous suns who myriad miles above
The sky, desire to send their far-off light
To earth, are now shut out. Their scintillation
 bright
Is hid by black and murky mask.
And Cynthia herself can show no more
Her beaming, placid face, and her strong spouse
Through atmosphere has ceased to dart his rays ;
For all is steamy, cold, and vaporous.

The Heavens unhappy at such fate weep tears
Of sadness. Winds moan and sigh, and all

Without is misery. Birds hide their heads ;
Their song is hushed ; their pleasant warblings
 ceased,
For in this darksome time all Nature mourns.

SOUVENIR OF OXFORD

LIKE echoes oft repeated through a chain
Of mighty hills, reverberating far,
Whose voice so strangely multiplied doth leap
From peak to peak ; or as a train of dear
Sweet visions, each one brighter than the last,
So thy remembrances, fair city come
Before mine eyes, and ever in my thoughts
Are imaged forms so life-like, real,—true—
They take a tangibility so clear,
That fain I would persuade myself once more
I live, I move among them.

Now I glide
Most softly o'er the rippling waters bright
Of lovely Isis ; where the willows bend
With graceful mien from rich and verdant banks,
And seem to watch their own reflection fair

In drooping modesty. And blue forget-me-nots
Shy peeping from their em'rald beds, now set
My heart aglow.

Imagination fondly takes me next
Beneath the cool deep shade of noble trees,
Which clothed in beauteous dress of green stand
 forth
All radiant in their freshness, new and bright ;
Suggesting thoughts for utterance too high,
Too deep for words to give expression true.

And now the soul in tend'rest rapture turns
To dear associations of the past ;
For mem'ry quick recalls how genius trod
That very path long time ago, in grave
And serious contemplation.

Again the scene is changed. I see uprise,
As vivid antique pictures, forms distinct
Of venerable piles, whose ancient walls
All ivy-covered ; fair, and shapely domes,
And arches curiously carved, inspire
Me straight with rev'rence deep ; I bow me down

In meek humility ; my soul is stirred
With loving wonder at the mighty Past.
And looking back through centuries, I see
What warm enthusiasm, zeal, and love
Have done, how much they have attained !
How each succeeding generation made
Sweet Learning its own mistress, framing thus
A scheme of evolution broad, and true,
And perfecting.

Thou city of religion, then, farewell !
Of realism, beauty, learning deep ;
Of pleasure, labour ; prejudices old,
Ideals new : but ever shall these last
Strive hard and struggle ; surely in the end
Their victory over ancient notions gain ;
Which like old men all ready for the grave,
Shall gently pass away from ev'ry mind,
And only by the new and vig'rous be
Remembered long for their antiquity.

THE LOVE OF UTHUR

OR, LEAVES FROM ANCIENT ANNALS

THE LOVE OF UThER

OR, LEAVES FROM ANCIENT ANNALS

PART I

DEATH OF AURELIUS

UPON his royal couch Aurelius¹ lay
All sick, and they who loved him, day by day
Soft whispered to each other—' Would that some
Deep learnèd man of healing art could come
And ease our king ; for sorely straitened we
To see him peak and pine all helplessly
At such a troublous time. Those Saxons vile,
Led by Pascentius, invade our land, defile
The peaceful homes of Britain. Yet the bold,
Strong Uther, brother to the king, doth hold
The conduct of the war, and all valiantly
Will lead the army on to victory.'

¹ Aurelius Ambrosius, King of Britain, A.D. 484.

So hoped the Britons ; but the Saxons grew
More bold, and flattered they themselves anew ;
That Fate had favoured them with fortune fair
To lay Aurelius low in time of war.

Then Eopa to the invaders came,
And spake,—‘ What the reward, and what the
name ;

What will ye give if there be one who'll slay
The smitten king, and thus no more delay
The laurels that be yours ? ’ Pascentius said—
‘ Oh, that I could find a man inbred
With such brave resolution ! I would give
A thousand pounds of silver ; and while I live
Make him my friend ; and if the crown I gain,
He shall centurion be, while I the king shall reign.’

To this the Saxon Eopa replied,—
‘ I am well skilled in Physic ; but beside
All this I know the manners—speech
Of Britons, and in their own tongue can reach
The court and king. If thou wilt swear an oath
To well perform thy word, I give my troth
That I this part all faithful undertake.’

Pascentius readily complied—' I make
This covenant most solemnly with thee.'
He swore the oath ; 'twas sealed ; and silently
The Saxon left the presence of the son
Of Vortigern. Before the day was done
The wily Eopa had shaved his head,
And in the habit of a monk had sped
To Winchester, armed with a mighty load
Of drugs, he hied him to the king's abode.

Then, with an air of holy sanctity,
And look of wisdom suiting his degree,
He simulated sorrow ; great access
Of sympathy for King Aurelius :
And offering his services to heal
The stricken monarch, promised with great zeal
To quickly bring him into health, and make
The fount of life with vigour to awake.

All willingly they listened him, and gave
Unhesitating the liberty he crave.
Then led him to the king : with anxious air
He soft approached the couch ; with tender care
The baleful draught he bade the monarch drink.

‘ Drink ! ’ said he, ‘ and sleep ; to-morrow thou wilt
think

Thou never hadst a pain ; thy sickness seem
To be some vague, and half-forgotten dream :
Now lie thee still, and fear not ; court sweet sleep,
Let silent slumber soon thine eyelids steep.’

The poor drugged king now slept, and ever slept,
Until the life-stream in its courses kept
No action : then, they knew the king was dead,
And Eopa, the false physician, fled.

Then in the heavens a mighty star appeared,
Most brilliant its light, and strangely weird
In shape : for, darting forth a fiery ray
This ended in a dragon, whose jaws lay
Gaping ; sending forth two other rays of light,
Of which one reached to Gaul ; one beaming bright
Upon the Irish Sea, was finished by
Seven other rays of less intensity.

And all the people wondered ; and great fear
At sight of this strange star spread everywhere.
Even the gallant Uther now betrayed

Disturbance of his mind, as all dismayed
He gazed upon the fiery orb while on
His march to Cambria. 'No comparison
Bears this to aught I've seen ; now quickly go,
Bring Merlin, the magician, for I would know
The full interpretation of these signs,
If evil doth portend our harassed lines.'

Thus Uther spake, and Merlin,—who following
The fortunes of the war that he might bring
Good counsel unto Uther,—then lifted high
His voice, and with a wail, and woeful cry,
While tears adown his cheeks their channels made,
Uttered the words of prophecy, and said—

'Alas, alas, the king is dead ! Now woe,
Now death, now doom is on us all, for lo,
The king is dead ! Yet, Uther, that bright star
Doth signify thyself : take heart ; this war
Shall end in thy renown, and thou shalt reign
All over Britain, and the crown remain
Most steadfast on thine head ; for, from thee
Shall spring a son most potent, that shall be
A monarch great, whose rule shall reach as far,

And wide as doth the rays of yon bright star.
Thou art the dragon ; and the other ray
That emanates from thee is picture of the sway
Of thy fair daughter, who in turn shall bear
Her husband royal sons, whose every care
Shall be to win their subjects greatest good ;
And rule all Britain with solicitude.'

And Uther, scarce believing all was true
Marched on to battle ; valiantly drew
His forces nigh Menevia,¹ where lay
The Saxons. Fierce the battle raged all day,
And each side suffered keenly : 'twas most long,
And bloody ; in the end the bold and strong
Pascentius, with Gillomanus were slain,
And all their forces routed from the plain.

And Uther followed even to the sea,
Where th' invaders sought their ships, to flee
The swift pursuer. Messengers soon came
To camp, who brought account of that vile scheme
Which slew the stricken king. Then, Uther went
His way to Winchester, where reverent

¹ St. David's, Wales.

Bishops, abbots, and persons of degree
Assembled were in great solemnity
To render to the dead the sacred rite,
With all the pomp, and honour requisite,
For royal obsequies. And in the tomb
Reared by Aurelius, whose stones had come
From Mount Killarius, the manes were placed ;
A monument ¹ that time hath not effaced.

Succeeding this in great magnificence
The crowning came, and conference,
Where with one accord they Uther chose for king :
And Merlin's prophecy remembering

¹ The monument of antiquity now called Stonehenge. According to the legend these stones possessed medicinal properties, and were brought over from Africa to Ireland by giants, who used them for healing-baths ; whence Aurelius, by the magical aid of Merlin, had them conveyed to Britain, and constructed into a mausoleum for himself. Francis Palgrave says—'The temples in which the Britons worshipped their deities were composed of large rough stones disposed in circles, for they had not sufficient skill to execute finished edifices. Some of these circles are yet existing ; such is Stonehenge, near Salisbury ; the huge masses of rock may still be seen there, grey with age ; Stonehenge possesses a stern and savage magnificence, the masses of which it is composed are so large that the structure seems to have been raised by more than human power.'

King Uther caused two dragons of pure gold,
In likeness of the star which had foretold
His power, to be constructed. One he gave
To Holy Church ; the other he would have
As lucky talisman to take at ev'ry war
In memory of the strange prophetic star.
And both were finest wrought, all skilfully
In veriest workmanship that be :
Then was ' Pendragon ' added to his name,
Or ' Dragon's Head,' by popular acclaim.

PART II

THE BATTLE

MEANWHILE, the enemy now bore
On luckless Britain. Octa, bound no more
By treaty made with King Aurelius,
The Saxon army joined most treacherous ;
Who pressing message unto Germany sent
For troops to swell their numbers, and augment
Their heavy forces ; which exceeded far
In numbers Uther's troops ; and everywhere

They ruin, desolation, spread around,
And ravished, razed fair cities to the ground.
With this vast army Octa then made waste
The northern provinces ; urging great haste
He sieged the places fortified, and sped
His way to York, so thither Uther led
His forces : gallantly he made onslaught
Upon the bold marauders, courageous wrought
Heroic wonders. Now, from his chariot leapt
The British warrior, and fiercely swept
The Saxon lines with long, and glitt'ring sword ;
While the skilful charioteer in keen accord
His well-trained steeds would swiftly turn aside
To give good space for prowess ; there abide
The issue of the struggle, and give good aid
If worsted were his comrade. Full well arrayed
With numerous piles of javelins, a line
Of charioteers in steady discipline
Came tearing through each Saxon rank,
And with deft aim the pointed weapons sank
Deep in the breast, or mayhap at the head
Of many a stout barbarian ; who red
With streaming gore, and weak with deepest wound
Would spend his ebbing strength on all around

With fierce, and deadly thrusts. In contest close
The short sharp sword of these barbarian foes
Proved instruments death-dealing : swiftly down
They mowed the Britons, whose corpses white were
 strown

Upon the reddened plain. Yet all that day
They unremitting fought, until the grey
Of evening, on the tempestuous scene,
Closed for a brief night's space the conflict keen.

Thus, were Uther's legions by th' invading force
Outweighed in valour. However brave their course
Throughout the fight, the Saxon dogs devoured
The struggling Britons. The remnant overpowered
At length some safety sought, to flee the slaughter
 made

For Hill of Damen, where the friendly shade
Of Hazel trees fair sheltered the pursued,
And rocky caverns in centre of this solitude—
The wild beasts' lair—the soldiers did impress,
As harbours welcome in their dire distress.

No sleep that night pressed down the lids of king
Or commoner ; for what the morn would bring

Made tremble every heart. Night nearly spent,
The king to all his consuls message sent
To hold a council ; when assembled gave
To Gorlois, the Duke of Cornwall, first leave
To make his motion. Being of them all
The eldest, bearing ripe experience,
The king accorded him pre-eminence.

‘ This is no time for ceremonies fine,
Or speeches ; for unless we well combine
Our chance is lost ; our lives, or freedom gone
If we keep still till shines the morning sun.
But rather let us rise while darkened night
Our scanty numbers covers o’er from sight ;
And keeping well compact make rush and raid
Upon the enemy, who all dismayed,
And taken by surprise, will haply prove
Our victims, not our victors, by this move.’

Thus spake Gorlois, the duke : with one consent
The council well received his argument.
Collecting all their troops the rugged slope
The warriors descended, and high with hope
All silently and soft pursued their way

To where the heavy-sleeping Saxons lay,
And pounced upon their guards ; who instantly
Proclaimed approach of coming enemy
With loud-voiced bugles. Swift they pushed their
course

Towards the Saxons ; with vehement force
Rushed right, and left, and ruthlessly they hewed
The half-awakened men ; who nearly nude,
And all unarmed ran madly here and there
In 'wildered, wild confusion ; for where
A Saxon missed one sword, he straight would fall
Beneath another. Thus were slaughtered all
King Uther's foes ; of all their hosts scarce one
Remained, to tell how Britons lost, and won.

‘ Firmly hath the archer fixed his bow ;
Like wind the cunning arrow
Cleaves its wingèd way towards the foe
To pierce him to the marrow.

‘ Iron warriors hurled the javelin
With force all full unswerving ;
Cord-like swells the knotted muscles in
Each limb, good purpose serving.

‘ Scythèd chariots swiftly hew their way
Through the lines unheeding :
Helmèd knights in all their war array
Their chargers boldly speeding.

‘ Scythe, nor spear, nor dart, nor glitt’ring sword,
The bold marauders vanquished ;
But the arm of God, the mighty Lord,
The heathen dogs¹ extinguished.

‘ Weep for your dead, oh, women, weep as rain,
Nor stay the wild emotion ;
For you ne’er shall see your pagan men
Come sailing o’er the ocean.

‘ Stark and stiff they stay upon the plain
With faces upturned lying ;
Curse nor caress shall never again
Come from the lips of the dying.

‘ Weep, weep, oh ye women, weep for aye,
Though the western wind is blowing
Over the sea this dawn of sweet day,
No white sail shall be showing.’

¹ The Britons applied to the Saxons constantly, the epithets—‘ dog,’ ‘ barbarian,’ &c.

Thus sang the thankful Uther, giving God
The praise ; while the legionaries raised the
sod,

And reverent laid beneath their own dear dead.
Then marched they on to London ; thither led
As prisoners Eosa and Octa, who stirred
The Saxons with great confidence ; whose word
Brought hosts of fresh invaders. News of raid,
And ravage, and rapine was quickly laid
Before the king that Caledonians were
For ever lawless, plundering ; void of fear,
Undisciplined. Then Uther with much care
Quelled the contumely ; punished the pillager,
And straightway made strict laws of equity
To govern his dominions steadily ;
And forcibly their prompt obedience brought
That all might live in harmony throughout.

And mild-eyed Peace proclaimed her gentle
sway

All over Britain ; and mingled with the Bay
Meek olive-branches decked each warrior's
head,

And o'er his brow an ambient glamour shed.

A sheen more honoured ; of nobler sort,
Than all the laurels that can grace a court :
For kings, proud Conquest is most glorious art ;
For subjects, Peace doth play the better part.

PART III

THE BANQUET

AND when the Ides of March drew near, the king
Would have a royal banquet ; issuing
Invites to his nobles ; and all the fair
Of Britain's daughters Uther summoned there,
And bade he graciously each high-born guest
To grace his court, do honour to his feast.
Being the festival of Easter-tide
King Uther thought to honour it ; beside
'Twas his desire to meet his subjects face
To face ; gain their esteem, give royal grace ;
And thus by mutual affections bind
The Ruled, and Ruler in harmonious mind.

The king arrayed in royal robes and crown,
Covered with glory ; justly-earned renown,

In great solemnity, and pomp, and state
The Church's festival did celebrate.
From every city fair the nobles came
To greet the conqueror with loud acclaim :
All gentle blood of Britain now essayed
To show him honour. Many a beauteous maid
All bright with gems, in rich apparel tired,
To royal grace would gladly have aspired.

The royal banquet set 'neath silken tent,
Was costly, rich ; on scale magnificent :
On silver vessels of beauteous design
Were delicacies served, and dishes fine :
In glistening wine-cups of pure gold did shine
The red, or amber juice of choicest wine.
And silken couches from Damascus' loom
Were ranged in Roman style all through the
room :—

For simplicity of the Briton's home
Was changed for luxuries of conquering Rome—
And costly tables of sweet-smelling wood,
Brought from Eastern groves, vied with the food
In yielding delicate odour. While breath
Of fresh spring-flowers, woven with green heath,

Delicious fragrance shed throughout the air,
And made a multiple of perfumes there.
The whole was blended with harmonious sound ;
For melting music swept the space around :
Thus cultured art enhanced th' enraptured sight,
And every sense was steeped in sweet delight.

And all the stateliest in the land were there ;
Long trains of lovely women ; and every fair
Was led by noble knight of high renown,
And braves, and beauties in one phalanx shone.

Of all the glittering galaxy none saw,
The equal of the lady of Gorlois : ¹
Of queenly mien, of loveliest form, and eyes
Like gems set in translucent skies.
And all the beauty of the court was dimmed
By fair Igera : to Uther's eyes she seemed
To stand a peerless pearl ; a diamond divine ;
Beyond all price, and fitted most to shine

¹ This name I take to be Gallic, and have consequently given it the modern French pronunciation as in *Dunois*. The pronunciation of old French is as entirely lost to the French of the present day, as Old English is to us, therefore only the modern style can be safely given.

In kingly coronet of the Great on earth ;
A prizeful jewel of unbounded worth.

Upon her beauty Uther gazed with eyes
That saw no other ; all women she outvies
In every gentle grace. Her voice now thrilled
With soft delight his ravished ears, and filled
His listening soul with music's harmony
Sweet as the rippling water's melody.
And heedless Uther knew not this was Love,
Which took away his strength, and sweetly wove
Around him mystic chains, that gave
A mingled joy, and left him veriest slave.

Only to Igera the king's discourse
Was e'er addressed ; his care at every course
Of tempting viands to send most delicate
Of the dainties to this fair lady's plate :
And when he quaffed the ' cyathus ' of wine,
His toast was fair Igera. To enshrine
Her in most honour, as oft he filled the same,
He drank to every letter in her name.¹

¹ This was a Roman custom. To give extraordinary honour to a person the Romans at a feast would drink a

His smiles to sweet Igern alone were given
All through that festive day, and when the even
Drew on, and revelry began, he sent
Her golden cups by his own confidante.

And while the king was bound in love, the song
Was sung, the harp was strung the whole night
long.

THE HUNTER'S SONG

I

‘ THROUGH forest, over heather,
Regardless of all weather,
I range a hunter bold,
The sylvan woods I’m keeping,
With pearly dew-drops dreeping
To be my own stronghold.

cyathus of wine as often as the number of letters contained in the name of the person toasted. The cyathus was a certain measure that held the allowance of pure wine which was always mixed with a fixed quantity of water.

II

‘ And when the skies are looming ;
Her cannon Nature’s booming
 Through darkened firmament ;
I watch the lightning sunder,
’Midst crashing of the thunder,
 The trees magnificent.

III

‘ Though quick the woodcock’s flying,
My bow and arrow plying
 I reach it in a trice :
The boar that’s madly rushing,
And thick-set brushwood crushing,
 My needs help to suffice.

IV

‘ In truth, I’m monarch royal,
For subjects none so loyal
 As those the woods bestow :
No jealousy assails me,
My dog he never fails me,
 My sceptre is my bow.

V

' The pure and crystal fountain
That trickles down the mountain :
 My thirst doth soon allay :
Day vanishes so fleetly,
And evening comes so sweetly,
 I scarce feel them glide away.

VI

' Before the stars are gleaming,
While yet the sun is streaming,
 Its glories from the west :
While his crimson rays soft glimmer
Through the trees with elf-like shimmer,
 I seek my mountain nest.'

THE POET'S SONG TO HIS LADY

I

' COME to the woods while day is brightly beaming
 And songsters fill the air ;
The earth is filled with life and beauty, seeming
 A paradise so fair.

II

' The flowery mead in gayest colours smiling
 Reflects the sun's bright beams :
The brooklet sweet with murmurs soft be-
 guing
 Sends forth the purest streams.

III

' At eve we'll watch, when day is calmly
 closing,
 The sunset 'neath the hill ;
And feathered choristers are soft reposing ;
 And all is hushed and still.

IV

' The blue skies gemmed with stars that
 beaming brightly
 O'er this fair world of ours,
Sends whispering winds to play so lightly
 Their music 'mongst the flowers.

V

‘ Fair beauty and sweetness now are pervading ;
Filling the earth and sea ;
Ah, whether sunshine, or even’s soft shading,
All teems with good for thee.’

THE MINSTREL’S SONG

I

‘ AH, Music and Song, how I love ye twain well !
Now, come and cast over me your sunny spell !
Come hither, your charms unto me now reveal ;
Come ravish my senses, and make me to feel
The care that surrounds and oppresseth the mind,
Is fled by the flow of your measure combined.
Enhanced are the ripples of sound, that enfold
Mine ears, by the poet’s sweet story that’s told.

II

‘ Ah, how can the lover his heart disclose,
Which bursts with the fulness of love’s gentle
throes,
To her he adores with his whole soul’s delight,
Without whom existence would be as dark night ?
'Tis sweet voice, and sweet verse that can tell his
tale,
Express it with fervour that never can fail ;
Her heart it will melt at the soft witching strain,
While swells her white bosom with Love’s sweet
pain.

III

‘ Two-fold is the beauty of Music, and Song ;
A foretaste of heaven while to earth we belong ;
They lift up the soul to ethereal bliss,
With ecstasy pure like a lover’s first kiss.
The heart-sick and weary most gently they soothe,
Life’s rough stony ways delightfully smooth :
Give courage anew to the warrior when faint ;
Softening the sinner ; inspiring the saint.’

PART IV

THE QUARREL

GORLOIS, the Duke, perceiving how the king
Paid court to his fair wife, with her took wing
At once to Cornwall ; nor did he crave
Permission thus to quit, but took his leave
Abruptly. The king insulted in his court,
Vexed, and indignant sent a summons short
To quick return, and pay apology,
All due to host as well as royalty :
But th' angered, jealous duke was stiff and stern,
With scorn, most sullenly refused to turn
Him back again to court ; for well he knew
The prime, sole cause why this disturbance grew ;
He clearly saw 'twas not *his* grim old face
That thwarted Uther longed his court to grace.

Set at defiance thus King Uther swore
A hasty oath, and hotly vowed he'd lower
Gorlois' proud arrogance ; while furious heat
Filled all his blood, he bade his army meet.

Gorlois unswerving from his course, now placed
His vassals and his warriors in great haste
To stand a siege ; for no equivalent
Of men had he to the vast complement
Of royal troops commanded by his foe ;
He therefore made defence alone, to throw
Attack on Uther. On the wild sea-shore
Was reared his castle of Tintagel ;¹ more
Strong, and inaccessible than any tower
Within the realms of Britain ; for its power
Was helped by rugged Nature. Here frowned
The grey impenetrable rocks all round,
Like giants great emerging from the wave,
Sustaining solid walls of stone, that gave
No entrance there ; save by a passage small
And narrow, that three fighting-men were all
Defence the castle needed. To keep secure
His wife, Gorlois within this fortress sure
Now placed her ; and in his wisdom thought
'Twere best to thus divide. Said he,—‘ If aught
Of ill befall the town wherein I stay,
There is she safe, secure from all the fray ;

¹ The ruins of this castle still exist, and show that it must have been a place of great strength.

Within Dimilioc the siege I can sustain
Till aid shall come from Erin o'er the main.'

The sun was sinking 'neath a glorious pile
Of crimson-tinted clouds, and for awhile
Bathed Uther's tents in richest tints of gold.
It played upon the rippling sea that rolled
In rhythmic motion on the smooth sea-shore,
And gleamed and glistened more, and more,
As wave succeeded wave in endless train,
Kissing th' expectant shore again, and yet again.

It lit the hedgerows with more vivid hue ;
It oped the blades of budding corn that grew
So tall, and waxed in verdant strength each day,
Till crushed by ruthless feet they dying lay,
Like children swept untimely from the breast,
By famine, sword, or pestilential waste.

And Uther in his anger fiercely warred
Against Gorlois, nor spared the fire, nor sword ;
Upon Dimilioc's fields he pitched his tent
With all the force of royal armament.

But pangs of conscience ever and anon
Depressed his mind, howe'er he strove to shun
Uneasy murmurs. In his heart he felt
'Twas not the insult of the duke that dealt
A blow to kingly pride, but inward fire
Of passionate love that filled him with desire ;
Converting all the sweets, and good of life
To one long hellish stream of endless strife.

PART V

THE CONCEPTION OF KING ARTHUR

AND Uther sat within his camp that eve
In melancholy thought ; nor longer could deceive
Himself with reasons plausible to make
The siege continue. Then, he to Ulfín spake—
Brave Ulfín his familiar friend, and said,—
' I'm weary of this war, and hate to shed
The blood of mine own subjects, though Gorlois
Hath given me scorn, I'll even now withdraw.
Oh, Ulfín, woe the day, and woe the hour
That e'er I saw Igera ; for me no more

Hath life the shadow of a joy ; nor peace :
Lost to me the sweets of conquest, unless
I may possess Igerna. In my heart
There burns a passion strong, whose counterpart
Hath no existence. Now, am I consumed
With love all strong and powerful, and doomed
To bear a flame that hath no parallel
In all my past. Oh, Ulfín, is it well
That I should die ? Yes, death will prove
The inextinguishable force of love.'

While thus he spake his eyes grew dim, and dew'd
With tears, unlike his hardy habitude ;
His ruddy cheeks embrowned by sun, or rain,
Or biting wind, when camping in the plain,
Were paled and sunken by the lack of rest ;
Unerring witness of unquiet breast.
And while the fretted king the silence broke
His manly frame with strong emotion shook ;
And lowly bowed he down his mournful head.
Then Ulfín to his master sorrowing said—

' It grieveth me sorely to see my king
Sighing in sorrow all unavailing.

Oh, why dost thou dwell on the lady's charm
With unsatisfied love that can only harm ?
For safe is she lodged in Tintagel's town,
Girt by the sea-wave and thick walls of stone ;
And the bravest warriors of all thy train
Could ne'er make a breach, nor an access gain :
Now, let me call Merlin, the deep, and wise,
Who out of his wisdom might now devise
Some magical method to gain this prize.'

And Merlin was brought to the king that eve,—
For he kept with the camp that he might give
Good counsel to Uther, and lend his aid
With rare words of wisdom when came the need.
When Uther revealed the torments he bore
To Merlin, his friend and counsellor,
Then pained was the prophet to learn, that he
Was held in a hopeless supremacy.

But he comforted Uther whose soul waxed light
At the glorious plan he unfolded that night.
'By my art,' said he, 'I will change thy face
To that of Gorlois, with his figure and dress :

And Ulfín will I metamorphosise
To Jordan, his comrade ; with this disguise
To Tintagel's gate I'll go with ye twain,
And order the guards to open amain.'

And Merlin, the Wise, by his magical law
Converted the king into Duke Gorlois ;
And he and his friends were disguised so well
When they came to the Castle of Tintagel,
That th' intelligent guards oped wide the door,
Supposing their lord had come to the bower
Of his beautiful wife that twilight hour.

Igerna, the fair, was so well deceived,
She ne'er hesitated, but straight believed
That she held in her arms her own Gorlois,
Who filled with delight, and rapturous joy,
Now kissed and caressed her the livelong night,
And tenderly told her when morning's light
Peeped over their heads, what risk might incur
In leaving his castle for love of her.
And love-songs sang he to softly beguile
His sweet lady fair, and win one more smile.

‘ Dearest, tell me which is first
Of thy winning graces,
Rival beauties meet mine eyes
In so many places ?

‘ Love circles round thy lips
Like a cupid lying
In a rosy, coral bed,
While his arrows flying

‘ Swift upon their dang’rous course
To unsuspecting victim ;
Who is forced to yield himself
To that fateful dictum.

‘ So in thine archèd brows
Even there he’s hiding ;
Each mute unerring shaft
In quick succession sliding.

‘ In every look of thine
Love is surely peeping ;
Thine every motion proves
That he’s never sleeping.

‘ Love lights those liquid eyes
Till in very seeming,
The brightest star is shamed
At their lustrous gleaming.

‘ Fringed lids shade their light
With a tender veiling,
As cloudlets through the heavens
’Neath the stars are sailing ;

‘ Hiding now their lustre bright ;
Now their light revealing,
While through the firmament
Rays are softly stealing.

‘ Yes, thou hast bound me quite
To thyself securely,
By a thousand magic charms
I am thine, most surely.

‘ Links fastened by such spells
Never can be riven ;
Oh, what enchantment sweet
Unto thee is given !’

Thus sang th' enraptured Uther, all untired,
By sweet deliciousness of love inspired ;
In bliss they spent a long dear night of love,
Like mated doves that coo in shady grove ;
Igern conceived in loyal love that night
The goodliest son that e'er saw the light,
Arthur, bravest prince that Britain ever knew ;
The kingliest of kings ; most gentle, true.

PART VI

DEATH OF GORLOIS, AND MARRIAGE OF UThER

ERE morning broke the absence of the king
Was full discovered ; and what strange thing
Had now befallen him his legions made
A cause of wonder. Gladly they essayed
To hurry on the siege, and make attack
Most desperate ; cagerly they longed to sack
Dimilioc's fair town ; themselves repay
For Uther's indecision and delay.

Gorlois, with scanty numbers now rushed out
Most rashly on the royal troops, and thought

To win his way victorious by a raid
All sudden on the foe ; fronting blockade
Of full-drawn swords he fell amidst the fight :
And every warrior, every wight
Each plundered as he willed, all unrestrained,
Nor deigned to share alike the booty gained.

Then messengers to Tintagel swift came
To give the duchess tidings of the same ;
Struck with surprise, she knew not how to act,
Nor reconcile the statement with the fact.
'My husband killed !' she unbelieving cried,
'And still my husband standing at my side !'
'My sweet,' said Uther, 'sure thy husband's here ;
Come kiss me ere I go, and have no fear.'

All quickly Uther hied him to the tent ;
Ridding himself of all disguise, he went
To camp, to test the tale he thought so vain,
Of Dimilioc sacked, and Gorlois slain.

But when the king the staunch old warrior saw
Slain with a score of wounds, the Duke Gorlois :

Then lifting up his voice he wept full sore ;
' And art thou gone, Gorlois, the brave ! No more
Shall I behold thy stern and honest face ;
No more thine iron arm shall leave its trace
Upon thy foes. Gorlois, thou diedst my foe ;
Deserved I well thy wrath. Oh, now I know
The pangs of biting conscience, and my heart
Moved with remorse doth feel the stinging smart—
The bitterness of friendship wronged, know I ;
For thee I wronged, Gorlois, most bitterly.'

And when the king his fallen foe had mourned,
His thought to his heart's idol fondly turned,
And all his grief was changed to keen delight,
When he full realised how soon he might
Crown her his own fair queen ; nor did he wait
A length of moons for her to meditate
In darkened widowhood ; but strove to dry
With soft caress, and soothing minstrelsy,
The ever-welling woe that filled her breast
In strong tempestuous waves of deep unrest.

Like a pale lily beaten to the ground
By fiercest winds ; whose courses all unbound

Know naught of mercy ; so she bowed her head,
Nor heeded what her lover fondly said.

‘ Canst thou forgive, Igerna ! At thy feet
I humbly sue for pardon, and entreat
Thine ample mercy. I would atone
My shameful fault, and sorrowfully own
I plucked the rose not mine ; which blushed in all
Inherent beauty : thus, did I forestall
The unexpected bliss that lit on me
With golden wings, and fixed my destiny.

‘ Now, like a rainbow merging from the cloud,
I see thy dove-like eyes shine through their shroud
Of mist, and greet me with a gentle gaze
Of God-like pity. Or, is it thy dispraise
Of my unutterable boldness ? Sweet,
Say by one dear smile, if all complete
Thou hast forgiven unseemly brimming-o’er
Abundance of my love, for evermore ?

‘ In kindness, cast not all the blame on me,
For man is not himself, when urgency

Of over-powering love doth master him.
Beloved, arise, merge from this sorrow dim,
And suffer thy sweet womanhood's dear sway
To meekly bend to Love, and me. Away
With Grief ; let my fond kisses now beguile
Thy soul to burst through cloud to sunny smile.'

I

' Pale sits fair Igerna within her strong tower,
And she weeps, and weeps for aye,
For her husband she weeps always ;
She mourns her dear lord with a sorrow all sore,
Oh, she mourns him night and day !

II

' And the breath of her sighs fills the space around,
And her sobs break through the air,
As she wails and weeps up there :
Like a dark pall falls from her brow to the ground
Her long waves of silken hair.

III

‘ All bedimmed is the rose upon her fair cheek,
And washed with the heavy rain,
Aye, washed and watered again ;
And fretted and changed to the pale lily meek,
With the tears, and sore heart-pain.

IV

‘ Oh, beautiful lady, now bind up thine hair,
Now bind it in shining braid
In coronet on thine head ;
Stay thy sad sighs, and cease thy sorrowful air,
And calm thee, for thy dear dead.

V

‘ For who is it loves thee, Igera the bright,
Igera my lily all pure,
With passionate love, and sure,
But thy sovereign lord, who sues for the right
To make his fair pearl secure ?

VI

‘ I will give thee one hour, my beloved, to weep,
 To weep one other sad hour,
 In the silence of thy bower ;
Then thy tears will I dry with kisses, and keep
 Thee ever, my own sweet flower.

VII

‘ Oh, sweet was the scent of the pure morning air
 That came o’er the bright sea-wave,
 And Tintagel’s towers did lave !
But my love she is sweeter, more soft, more fair
 Than the breath the south winds gave.

VIII

‘ And hid in the casket of my deepest heart
 I’ll treasure thee all my days ;
 My diamond worthy all praise ;
Thou gem of my crown set in golden art,
 And shedding divinest rays.’

IX

‘ Make thee ready, my love, for the marriage rite ;
 The solemn and sacred vow,
 Within an hour from now ;
Give joy to my soul, thou sweet star of my night ;
 Thyself on thy king bestow.

X

‘ And as the firm apple encloseth the seed
 All safely within its core,
 From frost and wintry show’r,
Until the ripe season of fair Earth’s good need
 Shall succour it evermore.

XI

‘ Even so shall I shelter thee, love, from all harm,
 And nourish thee in my breast,
 Like dove in its own sweet nest :
No rough wind shall assail thee, or biting storm,
 Till the earth shall give us rest.

XII

' Then, cease thy lamenting, my jewel, my crown,
Thou source of my soul's delight,
Who changest my dark to light ;
Array thee in robes of the bridal, my Own ;
And gladden my longing sight.'

One moment pale, then flushed with rosy red
Igera's tear-stained face, while being led
All trembling towards the altar, by the king
In happy triumph. And she fulfilling
Merlin's prophecy, gave to him her love
Unswerving, faithful : soon around him wove
In silent strength the sweet magnetic chain
Of wife, which throughout life bound close
the twain.

CAEDMON

AN EARLY ENGLISH IDYLL

CAEDMON

AN EARLY ENGLISH IDYLL

INTRODUCTION

EVERY student of early English literature is familiar with the story of Caedmon, the peasant-poet. Historians give him a marked position in their writings as forming a distinct epoch in English literature ; for Caedmon, ignorant and unlettered, and belonging to a race rude and uncultured, rose out of the darkness that surrounded him, in a truly wonderful manner. A thousand years before Milton's time this Whitby peasant sang the epic of the Creation, the first 'Paradise Lost.' In vivid language is depicted the War in Heaven, the Fall of Satan, and his counsellings in Hell. 'Thus, Caedmon began the first in time, and among the first in genius the strain in English poetry.'

Caedmon was in fact our first English poet ;

our Early Milton. His verse is full of dramatic power, and true poetical fervour. Here he sings of Satan fallen:—

‘Satan discoursed, he who henceforth ruled hell
Spake sorrowing.

God’s angel erst, he had shone white in heaven,
Till his soul urged, and most of all his pride,
That of the Lord of Hosts he should no more
Bend to the word. About his heart his soul
Tumultuously heaved, hot pains of wrath
Without him.

“Then,” said he, “Most unlike this narrow place
To that which once we knew, high in Heaven’s realm
Which my Lord gave me, though, therein no more
For the Almighty we hold royalties.
Yet right hath He not done in striking us
Down to the fiery bottom of hot hell.””

The monks with whom Caedmon was associated when he became an inmate of the monastery, were acquainted with the Chaldee Scriptures, and gave him the name of Caedmon, because his verse was taken from that scripture—‘In the beginning’ the Chaldee for which is ‘b Cadmon,’ thus, in every

sense it was a beginning, for it was the first dawn of Saxon genius in England.

Although Bede, and every historian downwards, give Caedmon due place in their histories, no poet has ever pictured the story of his hearth-life, or woven around him in imagination the probable incidents of his home, and immediate surroundings.

Bede informs us that 'Hilda received him into her monastery with all that he possessed.'

This implies either the possession of some little property, or family, or both. Being an elderly man at the time of his poetic inspiration, his family, if any, would be grown up. It was no uncommon thing at that time for married persons, in the enthusiasm of their new conversion, to give up husband or home for a monastic life, in order to promote the glory of God. Therefore, it is quite probable that Caedmon had a portion of his family living with him at the time he broke up his home to enter into the monastery.

The 'Idyll' presents a double picture to the reader ; on the one hand it recounts those incidents given by the Historian, and on the other, it fills up those spaces left out by him.

CAEDMON

THE oxen and horses all slowly along
The summer-white roads, were now wending their
way,

Bearing their burdens, as they patiently toiled
Alongside of the hedgerows, which robed in their
Emerald dress—new gift of the fair young Spring—
All scented, and decked with the may-blossom
bright,

Were mingling their sweets with the newly-mown
hay,

And with ravishing perfumes filling the air.

The Beechen trees bursting their bud-leaves,
branched out,

Beflecking in shapes all bewildering,

The beautiful scene, with their shadows all

Shifting, as light clouds in the arch of the sky.

At a turn in the road stood a cottage, meek,
Where dwelt Caedmon, the churl, the dreamer, yet
 wise,
And all urgent to learn the new story of Christ,
And Creation. His fathers, barbarian
Saxons by birth ; who worshipped Odin, as god,—
A dead hero ;—bowed them to sun, and to sea.
And Caedmon's dear gentle daughter, had now
 learnt
The new doctrine of love, from the God-serving nuns
Of Streaneshalch,¹ sea-town on our northern shore.

Overlooking the great rolling ocean, oft
Angrily lashed into motion, by north winds
And east winds, was the Abbey of Hilda, the saint ;
Hilda, the Princess, who rose as a Deborah—
Revealer of Truth, on the wilds of our northern
 shore.

Kings in humility for her counsel came,²

¹ Ancient name for Whitby. 'Streaneshalch' means, Bede tells us, 'the Bay of the Lighthouse.'

² 'Her prudence was so great that not only indifferent persons, but kings and princes came for her advice.'—BEDE.

Her wisdom-words drinking in reverence, deep,
And left her refreshed for their toil in the world.

From her teaching uprose
The Old Fathers, and heroes of gentle renown ;
Who quelled the wild passions of Northmen, brave,
Alone by the love that springs out of God's fount,
And laid for all time the foundation of faith
In the hearts and the book-lore of England.

Save his one daughter, Caedmon lived lone ; all else
Who belonged him were long since laid in their
grave ;
And his thoughts were all God-ward, but bound
his speech,
No utterance finding for the fire within.

When the gold of the sun turned to crimson, red,
And shadows fell long ; finished the toil of the
day,
Then Edna, his golden-haired daughter spake out,
Saying—' Father, dost thou remember the feast,
Our good eorl hath maken us ready to-night ?
We thither must hasten ; have share in the sport ;

For the harp and the song will merrily pass
The hours with good speed. And the old-time
Love-stories, old Ulfin, our neighbour, will tell,
Who weareth his ninety long winters full well,
On his snowy-white head.

‘ And cometh young
Ethwuld, the fisher, from Heorta,¹ to-day.
He longeth all greatly to join in the throng :
And sings he most sweetly the songs of the sea.
Now, look through the distance, and canst thou not
find
The sight of his brown sail just dotting the wave ?
Dear Ethwuld ! The daughters of Aegir² are now
Winging thee over the ocean, to help thee
To hie unto me.’

‘ My daughter, it doth not beseem thee to give
Such honour to sea-gods ; all idle this talk !
For only Almighty Lord reigns over all.

¹ ‘ Heorta ’ or ‘ Heruteu ’ ancient name for Hartlepool.

² In Scandinavian mythology Aegir was god of the sea, his daughters, the waves. Our ancestors for long retained their old superstitions, and kept them side by side with the new faith.

So Ethwuld is coming to greet thee ! 'Tis well ;
He is welcome to bed and to board this night,
For sake of his father, my friend of old-time.
But Edna, oh, set not thy heart upon him,
Nor think thee of marriage ; for fain I would see
Thee God-serving always, as the nuns who sing
 praise
To their King day and night, for love of His Name.

Then, swiftly uprose the deep blush on her cheek,
Which as quickly retreated, turning back on
Her heart, and leaving her pale as a white rose,
Whose petals untinted, and passionless, send
Only their sweets to the air.

' Give up Ethwuld !
Desert him, who loves me as dear as his life !
I cannot. 'Tis now all too late to undo !
I love him, and holds he my true plighted troth.
Yet, father, I still would obey thee. Take now
My promise. If Ethwuld all willingly yields
His just claim, myself I will give unto God.'

Then trembled the tears within their casements
 bright,

As dew on the flowers, or cloud hiding the stars :
And stirred was her whole soul, and heart deeply
 moved

By contending emotions, filling her breast.
Full oft had she longed to live only to God,
And give Him heart-service. Advancement 'bove
 all

To dwell 'neath the roof of his holiest saint,
The sweet Lady Hilda ; exalted beyond,
And above all women.¹ Who daily was blessed
By the poor ; revered by the wealthy and great.

That instant through the open door, Ethwuld's
 form

Across her vision came. In thoughtful tenderness,
Fearing lest to him the pleasure would be lost

¹ 'At Whitby Hilda was as mother to the child-princess, the one-year-old daughter of King Oswald's brother and successor, who grew up under her care, and became next abbess after her. She was as mother in her little community, and among the rude people round about, who long preserved the belief that her form was at certain times to be seen in a vision of sunshine among the ruins of the later abbey, built upon the site of hers. She so much encouraged the close study of Scripture that in her time many worthy servants of the Church, and five bishops, are said to have come out of her abbey.'—MORLEY.

Of that night's revel, she put away her grief,
Made good endeavour to greet him valiantly,
And meet him with a sunny smile. He, man-like,
Knew not the difference 'twixt the brightness
forced,
And the heart's true merriment. Donning her
hood,
She led the way athwart the fields to the abode,
Where now, the eager guests in full assemblage
met.

When finished the repast, and the mead sent round,
And all had well quaffed : they straightway sate
them down
In one great circle. Thither was brought the harp,
And in the simple minstrelsy each took part.
One touched the strings with cunning fingers ; or
one
Sang his heathen song, or told some Northland
tale.

The stranger to honour most, the host now bade
Young Ethwuld sing the first. Though embrowned
his cheeks

By sun, and rough sea-wind, still, the flush rose full,
As straight he stood, and, with deep melodious
 voice,
He sang the song of his birthplace.

THE FISHERMAN'S SONG

I

'AROUSE thee, my mate, for ye western breeze
 Now blows fresh, and free, and clear ;
Across ye white-foaming, and surging seas,
 And thou, our coble must steer ;

II

'For long have we waited ye fickle wind
 To lend her light fairy wing ;
But she with uncertain, and changeful mind,
 No help to us e'er would bring.

III

'And then we will hoist our one big, brown sail,
 To swell in ye morning's light ;
And away with our nets, and a pleasant gale,
 We'll hie us with all our might.

IV

‘ We’ll silently speed, as fishermen brave,
Who toil on ye ocean wide ;
While bright waves our boat will merrily lave,
As onwards we safely glide.

V

‘ But if ye false wind should change her soft tone,
And furious send ye storm,
And wild beats ye tempest, whose angry moan
Doth fill us with deep alarm ;

VI

‘ Our thoughts will then fly to ye dear old Bay,
Where those who love us are nigh ;
While watching for us through ye livelong day,
Their prayer will ascend on high.

VII

‘ Arouse thee, my mate, for ye western breeze,
Now blows fresh, and free, and clear,
Across ye white-foaming and surging seas,
And thou our coble must steer.’

Then full great applause was given Ethwuld's
song;

When, suddenly an old-time warrior uprose,
Regarding with scorn the theme of Ethwuld's lay :
' I will sing anent Great Odin's son, King Ring,
A lay learnt long ago in the old home-land.'

THE SCANDINAVIAN'S SONG

(THE CHOOSING OF A KING)

' O'ER hill and vale the Bud-staff,¹ fleet,
Calls to the Ting ;²
Prince Ring³ is dead ; the people meet
To choose a king.

¹ The bud-staff was made of wood, about a foot long, and was carried from house to house for the publication of news, or proclamations, which were inscribed thereon in runic characters.

² 'Ting' was an assembly first introduced by Frei at Upsala, where the people met three times a year for sacrifice, and also for the conduct of State affairs.

³ King Ring ruled over Ringarike, a part of Norway. These verses are translated from an original Scandinavian Saga.

‘ The warrior takes adown his blade
Of blue-bright steel,
Against his hand with care ’tis laid,
The edge to feel.

‘ The maiden cleans the helm awhile
With diligence ;
And blushes as she sees her smile
Reflected thence.

‘ Then to the field the people hie
Where bucklers ring ;
No tent was there, save cloudless sky
O’er open Ting.

‘ Above all, Frithyof was descried
With boy so fair,
’Twas royal child, close at his side
With golden hair.

‘ A murmuring voice went through the
throng ;—
“ To lead the host
He knoweth not ; and is too young
For Judge’s post.”

‘ The child is raised by Frithyof’s hands
On shield of steel :

“ Here is your king ! on him depends
The country’s weal.

“ And ancient Odin’s image grand
Before ye, see !

Descended from the royal line¹
Of Gods is he.

“ My sword his country’s just renown
Shall e’er protect ;
Hereafter with his father’s crown
He shall be decked.

“ Forseté, Baldur’s² son, I take,
As witness, thee ;
If ever I this oath should break,
Destroy thou me !”

¹ These kings invariably considered themselves descended from Odin, and traced their ancestry back to him.

² ‘Baldur’ is god of light, and typical of all good. ‘Forseté’ is Baldur’s son by Nanna, the god of justice. The sun is female in Scandinavian mythology ; the moon *male* !

‘ And from the shield the child looks round
 With eyes all bright ;
As eaglet looks from gloomy ground
 On Baldur’s light.¹

‘ But wearied now the youthful blood ;
 So with a bound,
The boy in proudly royal mood,
 Attained the ground.

‘ Then rang the voices from the Ting
 All full and free ;
“ We choose thee buckler’s child² of Ring,
 Our King to be ! ” ’

And the merry circle grew merrier still
At thought of their ancient Fatherland, which
 had

¹ ‘ Baldur’s light.’ This expression refers to the eagle looking at the sun.

² ‘ Buckler’s child,’ is an expression alluding to the custom of ancient northern nations, who, when they had elected a king, raised him on a shield, and carried him round the host in a triumphal procession.

Given birth to Gods.¹ And many a lay was sung
In great Odin's praise ; and Frigga, his fair wife ;
And strong Thor, their son—the Northern Trinity,
Which in Upsala's temple they had worshipped.

And Caedmon's poor heart was burning strong
within,

As listened he long to these vain verses sung,
Which now he full disdained. Still, he could not
sing

The praises of *his* God. Motionless and mute
Remained he there, all pained ; and dreading the
turn

He plainly saw approaching. Then, silently
He stole him from his seat ; and the merry band
Better served by tending to their tired beasts.

Then, Ulfen, white-haired man, all bowed by weight
Of many a weary winter, spake full clear ;
Recounting a story of a time within

¹ The religion of the Anglo-Saxons was a compound of the worship of Celestial bodies and of Hero-worship, termed *Sabæism*. The worship of Odin was common to all the Teutons. He was their king from whom their science and lore had been derived. The song of the bard and incantation of the sorcerer had been taught by Odin.

His sire's remembrance. A love-tale of a king,
Descendants, of whom these rough Northmen long
since
All clean annihilated.

OLD ULFIN'S STORY

I

' AS far northwards I wandered away,
I saw shining Heorta's fair Bay,
And I wended my way by the sand,
Till I came where the sea-robbers land.¹

II

' I saw nothing but rocks all around,
And dark caves reaching far underground,
But no soul in that solitude bare,
Nor the sign of a being was there.

¹ This is the place now called 'Black Hall Rocks.' Believed to have been a great resort of pirates, on account of its facilities for concealment. It possesses a weird, wild beauty of its own; being now a coastguard station, a few cottages relieve its solitude.

III

'Twas the heat of a bright summer's day,
Now, what think you I saw near the Bay ?
But a beautiful maiden bathing all free,
Laughing and laving in the cool sea.

IV

'How she splashed and she dashed in the wave !
How the sound of her clear voice now gave
Sweetest echoes on echoes, whose shock
Silver-belled seemed to play on each rock !

V

'Glittered the sun on the scene so fair ;
Sending his rays through her golden hair ;
Lighting the water with golden light ;
Topping the waves as they danced so bright.

VI

'Sparkled the blue eyes in their wild glee,
Brighter than sunbeams lighting the sea ;
Like a lily the limbs, fair and round,
Parted the waves at each merry bound.

VII

' Oh, what luck, lackaday, lackaday !
Now whom think you came passing that way,
But King Locrin, the brave, who traversed
Past the place where the maid was immersed.

VIII

' But the sight of the nymph in the sea,
Nude as the flowers that grow on the lea,
Never came to his eyes ; nor espied
Maiden's garments hard by the rock-side.

IX

' Then, in soft dreamy mood sate he down,
Close to the robe of dark russet brown,
As if careful to keep in his sight
The lily-white linen, bright with sunlight.

X

' Horror-struck, and all under the sea
Dived the maiden as long as could be ;
But the day-dreaming king, from the spot
Never stirred even one little jot.

XI

‘ Sentinel unbidden still he stayed ;
Little dreaming what part would be played
By the rosy sea-nymph in her strait,
Growing crimson at thought of her fate.

XII

‘ “ Oh, for the ribbons of dark sea-brown,
Thickly upon the broad beach now strewn !
Never a one will come to my hand
While full plenty lie there on the sand ! ”

XIII

‘ Thus, Estrilda wailed out in her woe,
And the shame made her cheeks deeper glow,
And she prayed that the distant sea-weed,
Fate would float to her in her great need.

XIV

‘ Aegir listening the prayer of the maid,
Sent his daughters, the Waves, to her aid,
Who brought clusters of sea-ribbon, brown,
Over rocks, as they tumbled adown.

XV

‘ Aphrodite uprising from sea,
Than Estrilda no fairer could be,
As she timidly ’merged from the wave,
Robed in the raiment the sea-god gave.

XVI

‘ Now, from her waist of ivory fair
Hung the brown streamers, trembling in air ;
Hiding the limbs of shell-tinted hue,
While sea-zephyrs kissed, and parted them, too.

XVII

‘ Never in Britain beheld he before
Like of this Naiad, who ’thwart the sea-shore
Fleetly she fled far into a cave,
That opens its mouth anear the sea-wave.

XVIII

‘ “ Gods ! Do I dream ! Or, see I aright !
Is this beautiful being of light,
Goddess come hither from Northland shore,
Daughter of Estrild,¹ whom all Northmen adore ? ”

¹ Estrild was the god of love, in Northern Europe. The heroine of this story was daughter of a Northern Prince, and

XIX

‘ Thus he cried, and he suddenly knew
That a fire swept its courses all through
Heart, and brain ; and he bowed to the ground,
Homage paying to her he had found.

XX

‘ And he loved with a passionate love
Northland princess, whose beauty above,
And excelling all women’s, made glow
His soul with joy too sweet to forego.

XXI

‘ And around him she tenderly wove
Her heart’s truest, devotional love ;
And her bright eyes of violet deep,
Told the secret she fain would now keep.

XXII

‘ Then, Corineus raising on high
His great battle-axe, King Locrin drew nigh ;
Harshly in all the heat of his rage,
Cried—“ Die—traitor, die ! Or keep thy gage.

was evidently named after the god. The story treats of the ancient days of Britain.

XXIII

‘ “ Marry Estrilda, Barbarian vile !
My daughter desert, and shameful defile
Blood of fair Britain ; and basely break
Thine own pledge, for this strange woman's
sake !

XXIV

‘ “ Poor reward for the scars I now bear,
Remnant of wounds in many a war
Fought for thy sire ! Full well now I know
How much of gratitude kings bestow ! ”

XXV

‘ To appease Corineus, Locrin sware
Guendolena to marry, and share
With her his crown ; so he kept the troth
Wrung by ambition, and forced by wrath.

XXVI

‘ But he loved with a passionate love ;
Love, that naught on this earth could remove ;
And daily and nightly his tears would start
For the golden-haired maid who held his heart.

XXVII

‘ Within a subterranean hall,
Faithfully tended by many a thrall,
This Northern princess was kept in state
For the love of the king could ne’er abate.

XXVIII

‘ His devotional duties as shield
Made he for his visits concealed
To his love ; by this cunning device,
Of rendering his gods sacrifice.

XXIX

‘ When Corineus died, he banished from sight
The lady he loved not ; and brought to light
His hidden Estrilda, all full of grace ;
Made her his queen in Guendolena’s place.’

While spake the old man, all silent listened him ;
Not only for reverence of his great years,
But also for the strange love-tale he then told,
Which diversely charmed each willing listener.

Then missing Caedmon the company cried out
That he had basely treated them, and needs must
 pay
Some forfeit, which only his own kin must answer
 for.
To clear his debt, fair Edna, trembling, took
 place
Among the singers, and lightly touching strings
Of glee-wood, she sweetly sang an old quaint
 song.

THE SHEPHERD

EDNA'S SONG

‘ BY crystal fountains,
O'er grassy mountains,
 And pastures fair,
The shepherd speedeth,
His flock he feedeth,
And gently leadeth,
 The young with care.

II

' Few things he needeth,
Free life he leadeth
 In open air.
On God relieth :
The spring supplieth
 To him full share.

III

' His flock is biding
Where streams are gliding
 Beneath the shade.
The woods are seeming
With new life teeming :
The sun is beaming
 O'er hill and glade.

IV

' Evening 's advancing,
Shadows are dancing
 Over the hills.
The shepherd 's kneeling,
His heart is feeling
That God's kind dealing,
 All nature fills.'

Meanwhile the unhappy Caedmon full of shame
That he was dumb, and all powerless to sing,
Or, tell the tale in verse, as old Ulfín did,
Set himself to watch the cattle of the guests,
That while they made them merry, no harm
Should overtake the patient beasts which had
Conveyed the peasants from their more distant
homes.

Weary of watching he laid him down to rest,
And gentle sleep soon peacefully pressed his lids :
But, the fire that filled his breast throughout the day
Still haunted the visions of the night ; and dream
Most wonderful disclosed itself before him.

He thought the great Almighty had come nigh,
As he lay there ; and in a majestic tone
Straight issued the command—‘ Caedmon sing !’
And unaffrighted answered he—‘ I cannot sing,
I left the feast because I could not.’ But, still,
The Being at his side said, ‘ Sing !’ Caedmon
cried,
‘ Of what then must I sing ?’
‘ Of *Me* ; of all created things.’

And straightway the emotion of his mind
Found true utterance ; and all his soul was filled
With the poet's fuller conception, and all
A poet's beautiful imaginings.
The tongue, erstwhile all dumb for verse, burst
 forth,
And sang he sweetest songs ; yea, songs more
 sweet
Than mortal ever heard.
When morning broke he thought he had talked
 with God.

With this new inspiration filled, hastened he
To Lady Hilda, and audience humbly sought,
Which graciously she gave. Then recounted he
His glorious vision ; rendering the noble verse
He sang with God beside his couch, which upon
His mind most vividly remained. In deep surprise
The Lady Abbess listened, all strong impressed
With this most unexampled testimony
Of Power supreme.
Then she realised that this unlettered churl,
Who, in her presence shamed, and hesitating stood,
Was called to tell the wondering world His Work.

To Caedmon's mind, trained in humility,
'Twere presumption unsurpassed, but that he knew
A Higher, still, than Hilda bade him speak.

Willing to help the work which God commenced,
And further still to prove him, she council called
Of learned monks that they might witness how
This uncultured and unlettered man could sing
The epic of the great creation.

And one, by her command a scripture read
Which Hilda bade the poet turn to verse
To test his truth. Next morn he sang again
The verses sweet, new-made from Holy text.
Then Hilda knew the peasant was inspired.
And now, she issued the command that he
Be taught and trained, giving him privilege
Of dwelling there, devoted unto God.

And Caedmon wept for joy that he so lowly, rude,
And of such mean condition should be thus raised
To high estate of holy monk, and dwell
Beneath one roof ; with wise, illustrious men.
And ever dedicated he both voice and verse

To themes all holy and sublime ; and none in all
His time sang verse so eloquent as he.

When Edna's soft voice had ceased ; her simple lay
Fell with a tender influence on the hearts
Of the heathen around ; of God knowing naught.
Beckoning young Ethwuld to follow eftsoon,
With quick step she wended her way through the
wold

Illumed by the silvery light that outbeamed
From the night-lamp of heaven.
Looking upward, she gazed on the gentle orb,
That placidly shone from the blue arch above,
And ardently longed for the calm that dwelt there.

All through the revel she had hidden the pain,
And the tumult within her. Now, the great strain
Of joy all assumed, and fictitious, was past,
She burst into passionate sorrow, and cried—
' Oh, Ethwuld, how hard 'tis to give up the world—
The world, oh, my love, that holds thee ! '

His footsteps approaching her swiftly, at once
Arrested her speech.

‘ My Edna in tears !

What ails thee, my darling, that after the feast
Cometh this sorrow ? Hath Edgar, or churl
Been rude unto thee ? ’

Then she told him her strait. Her father’s com-
mand ;

Her gage to lead life of a virgin, to God
Devoted, if her lover would yield his claim.

Then Ethwuld turned white with the anger that
rose

All rapid and fierce through his frame. And the
fire

That flamed in his eyes fell like shot ; or the
point

Of an arrow that would pierce through heart or
brain.

‘ Where is thy love, I would ask thee ? I well trow
How little thou carest for me. Fool that I was
To believe thee ! Thy vows are as firm as sand
That shifts on the shore, or clouds that sail in sky ! ’

‘ Ethwuld, listen. Lay not this blame on mine
head !

The charge of the matter is *thine*. With thee rests
The final decision. Thou art the judge
Of my future. Say, shall I live unto God,
Or, for thee ? ’

‘ Ask thine own heart. I prize little the love
All halting between two resolves.
Mayhap after marriage thou wilt rue, and then
Desert me for nuns in the end ! What a faith !
For they teach it is good to leave husband, or child,
For God and His work. ’

Then Edna’s eyes filled ; but after a space
She lifted her head, and indignantly said—
‘ Even so let it be ! No more of thy doubts,
I’ll not rue *after* marriage, but *now* ! ’

And homeward she hastened, and left him alone :
In bitter resentment, stern stood he there ;
Out on the common, his face fanned by the winds
That played in the soft summer air.
And wildly he wandered all night on the wold,

In utter distraction, driven this way, and that,
As he balanced the matter in his wild brain.
Consumed by the passion that held him, at once
He would beg her forgiveness ; next moment felt
'Twas too late. At dawn of the day, when streaked
With new gold was the sky, Ethwuld was seen
In the distance sailing away on the sea.

And all that long night Edna waited return
Of her father ; drowned in her own bitter tears ;
Wailing the loss of her love : full of remorse,
She chid herself vainly for taking the share
In so thankless a task. Her father more fit
To tell his commands. The whole blame of his
wrath,

And strong indignation she placed on herself.
If chance had then brought him, she surely was his,
One soft word of love would have won back her
heart,

And melted the dissidence raised by her faith.

But that word never came ; and the stream of her
life

Took an opposite course. Helpless, and heart-sick
She drifted along the flood of her fate.

When the sun had attained its meridian,
Caedmon returned to his home radiant with joy,
And delirium at thought of his newly-found gift.
For ever to him a rich source of delight ;
A continual blessing ; a cup at his hand,
Filled with wine inexhaustible, giving new life,
And bestowing the richest of joys.
A fount ever welling, that shrinks not, like friends,
When dewy streams of the world's riches are
dried.
Unlike beauty which fades with the burden of
years,
Time only enriches this storehouse, its fruit
All mellows, refines.

As a sun-ray meeting with glittering diamond,
Or, polygonous crystal, is many times
Multiplied, so Edna rejoiced full tenfold
In the glory her sire had attained, such joy
That shed multitudinous rays of sunshine
O'er the home and the heart of her sire.

And zealously Caedmon now pressed the nun's veil
On Edna, for health of her soul, and new faith
To advance, that the light of God's love might be
seen

In the drear and the darkness around.
And her thought was of God, and daily her prayers
Went upward to Christ, and to Mary, for grace :
But her heart in deep yearning mourned mutely
for love,
As to Ethwuld she sent her farewell.

EDNA'S FAREWELL

I

' THINK of me only as thy friend
Whose memory is to thee,
As some sweet song that haunts thine ear
With tuneful melody.

II

' My love shall be the poet's theme,
Whose verses make the song ;
My heart-strings shall the music be,
Vibrating now so long.

III

‘The memory of mine eyes shall give
Thy strains their gentle flow,
And fill thee with emotion sweet,
That only poets know.

IV

‘And my soul shall be filled with joy
The angels fair, might take,
Pure as the streets of gold, they tread ;
Clear as the silver lake.

V

‘When over wave thy little bark
Glides on with fairy flight,
The picture on mine eyes is fixed,
And fills my inner sight.

VI

‘If in the stillness of the night
I long for quiet rest,
The one recurring thought is thee,
An ever-welcome guest.

VII

' Where'er thou art, where'er I be,
 Ah, Ethwuld, 'tis the same,
The distance cannot shut thee out,
 I only hear thy name !

VIII

' Think of me only as thy friend,
 Who without doubt shall be,
The truest, tenderest of all,
 That God can give to thee.

IX

' And the thought of the love I bear
 Shall be as glad sunlight,
Or, as the kindly dew of heaven,
 That droppeth in the night.

X

' Or, like the fragrance of sweet flowers
 That comes from a garden fair,
Their odours, wafted incense-like
 Amidst the balmy air.

XI

' Or, the calm of a holy hymn
That falls on all around,
When through the lofty pillared aisle
Is borne the mystic sound ;

XII

' The waves of music softly steal
O'er tired hearts gathered there ;
Like echoes sweet from heaven, they come
All floating through the air.

XIII

' Oh, Love, the sweetest aim in life,
What joy is given with thee,
Thine essence every soul pervades,
Thou rul'st eternally !

XIV

' Let an altar for ever be raised
To the Power all must own,
'Tis meet that Love be deified,
The heart of man her throne.

XV

‘ As memories come in our dreams,
Shadow the pictures of old ;
So love, now all living and warm,
Will end like a tale that’s told.’

All over the rugged steep, on which was reared
The Abbey of Hilda, the setting sun showered
His wonderful shades of deep gold ; which the sea,
Lying below, mirrored as fair as if ’twere
The face of a crystal lake.

Looking down on the scene
Or gazing far into the distance at sails
That dotted the wave, Edna stood on the edge
Of the steep, lost in sad bewildering thought :
Only one night lay between her and the world ;
Next morn the seal would be set that fixed her fate,
And the inviolable vow would be given.

Now, deeply was stirred all her soul with the old
Agitating, retrospective regrets :

For in full force felt she the fault of her weak,
And wavering purpose ; which, justly brought grave
Self-accusations.

How different her method had she better gauged
The state of her heart, fully conscious of love,
Now, felt she the coil of her fate winding round,
All due to her own irresolute doing !
Pendulum-like, her will worked this way, and that.
In imagination full clearly the scene
Was enacted before her. Yet, not the same.

In the unity perfect of knitted souls,
Whose purpose was firm, undivided, and sure,
The twain would have conquered her father's great
zeal,
And melted him to set in its own true place
Th' irresistible altar of sweet human love.

In the midst of her musings, like a dream ap-
peared
A white sail on the waterway which lightly bore
Towards the shore of Streaneshalch ; near and
more near
It steadily came on its way ; till she discerned

The boat of her lover swift skimming the wave,
All lit by the gold in the sky. Then her heart
Gave a bound, for she saw that young Ethwuld
drew nigh :

And hastening all quickly he clambered the steep
Where Edna sat silently weeping in woe.
Like a lily her cheeks with heart-sorrow, and wan
With her anguish and grief. But, now, the bright
flush

All over her face was suffused, and her eyes,
New lit by the light that came into her soul,
Beamed their welcome to Ethwuld ; showing her
heart,
At that exquisite moment, all bare to his gaze.

No tongue-knowledge seeking ; nor staying for
word,

He kissed her in passionate fervour, and led
Her away to the sea. And the soft summer wind
Full well knew it bore on its wings a new bride
To Heorta's wild shore. And the sea-birds saw,
As they wheeled in the air in wonderful flight,
And told it the rocks rising out of the wave,
That the fisherman's bride was come to her home.

SONGS, AND LYRICAL POEMS

THE STORM

I

THE storm without is wild and strong,
The rain in torrents beats
Upon the panes, and all along
The dark deserted streets.

II

But for the dismal noise of winds,
That shake the very floor ;—
Each gust some unseen crevice finds
Beneath the bolted door,—

III

There would be stillness everywhere,
For not a soul is seen ;
No children's voices fill the air ;
All wears a woeful mien.

IV

The sparrows too, are mute and still,
No fluttering wings abound ;
Their cheerful chirps no longer fill
The house-tops all around.

V

And many a little nest this night
That's stood the summer's rain
Ere morning brings its cold, grey light,
Will ne'er be seen again.

VI

And many a mariner this day,
Who's been to many a shore,
Will never again be heard to say—
He's seen the like before.

VII

And many a ship that's sailed away
With swelling canvas bright,
And left behind the broad, smooth bay,
Will never see the light.

VIII

And many a careless, happy child
All full of joyous glee
While gazing on the billows wild,
Of the angry, boiling sea,

IX

Will know full soon, the one so brave,
So loving, tender, true,
Whom mother prays her God to save,
Is lost with all his crew.

X

And many a gentle wife, just now,
Who's watching, hoping on,
Will something learn that shades her brow,
And makes her cheek grow wan.

XI

And all along the yellow strand,
And near 'the rocks,' I ween,
There's many a ship fast in the sand,
And many a wreck is seen.

XII

For, oh, the Storm so cruel, cold,
 Ne'er cares what hearts it breaks ;
What lives it spoils remains untold ;
 What misery it makes.

MATERNAL DEVOTION

PART I

I

SWEET memories rise unhidden in my breast
Of thee, my darling : in Love's warmest nest
Securely art thou hid. When thou art here
I cannot sing, nor tell what makes thee dear :
When thou art gone my bursting heart would move
In tend'rest measures of exalted love.

II

Communion close, and sympathy of thought
Brought us more near than Kindred could ; we
sought
Ambitions high and true. The noblest aims
Erstwhile didst fill thy soul, and all the names
Of men in bygone days, who won their state
Of honour, thy models were to imitate.

III

Thou art not only son, but brother—friend ;
The three all merged in one, and in these blend
Love, sympathy, and trust ; a triple cord
To firmly bind us twain. Unframed the word ;
Unknown the thought to analyse this chain
Subtle—unseen. Who can its depths obtain ?

IV

'Tis mighty, mystic Love that draws us nigh,
That sacred link ; that everlasting tie !
Ocean may rear between its broad deep wall :
The widest earth divide us far, yet all
Is naught to us. The world may pass away,
And all things fail, but Love is bound to stay.

MATERNAL DEVOTION

PART II

I

MUSING and dreaming, here sit I alone,
Thinking of moments that long since have flown :
March winds are tumbling, and rumbling ; and
rush
On their wild course, as if trying to crush
All that opposeth them ; conquerors free
In their mad flight they now strive hard to be.

II

Out of the Calendar, who would not own,
Insolent Ides, that he wishes thee gone ?
None love thy boisterous, roughly-hewn face ;
Nothing that's tender therein can we trace ;
Season more balmy, delicious I'd sight
If I could rule the ethereal height.

III

Go now, rough March, and take with thee thy
train ;

Long I for sunshine, and summer's soft rain ;

Long I to dream and gaze into the sky

Wherein fairy cloudlets sailing on high,

Shimmer and shake in the odorous breeze,

Wafted so gently from the southern seas.

IV

Ah, far above these there's a well-loved face

Wealth of the world could never replace ;

When it is absent the hearth is a-cold ;

Sun's gladdening rays do not as of old

Flow round my heart with their life-giving beams ;

Nature is icicled even in dreams.

V

Song hath gone from me ; for there is no sound ;

Only my heart-sighs that echo around ;

Sits by my Solitude whisp'ring ' At last,

Sister, accept me, I'm all that thou hast.'

Unwilling to take her, bow I my head,

Wishing that dear one were here in her stead.

MATERNAL DEVOTION

PART III

I

SILENTLY sitting close imprisoned here,
And weary of all this solitude drear
The days of November hath brought. I sigh—
Yet how vainly—for the beauteous sky,
For gossamer cloud ; for the sunshine fair
For the hum of the bee in the dreamy air ;

II

I look, and I long for the balmy breeze
That comes to our shores from the southern seas ;
The scent of the hay, the bright flowers so gay,
How I wish for one hour of summer day !
There's something I long for, far above these ;
E'en something more dear than the budding trees ;

III

For the cloud in the air, and the cloud in my breast
Now fill me with feeling of strange unrest ;
I long now to hear in these lonesome hours
The voice of my firstborn, more sweet than flowers,
More sweet than the songs which give me such joy
Are the tones of thy voice, my dearly-loved boy ;

IV

Fair harmony is the song of the birds,
A thousand-fold sweeter are thy heart-words :
Mine idol as babe ; in manhood the same,
Thou'rt part of my being, as the gold frame
Encircles a diamond, so art thou laid
Encased in the casket my strong love's made.

MATERNAL DEVOTION

PART IV

I

THOUGH cold and dark November
Brings yearly the happy morn,
That ever I remember
As the day that thou wert born ;
Yet bright it will be always,
And beaming a sun shall be,
That sun is Love, whose warm rays
Are surely lit up for thee.

II

Then faint not when aweary
With many an uphill stride,
For oft the path proves dreary
While yet it is being tried ;

But think of love so tender
That follows thee ev'rywhere ;
A love that seeks to render
Thy young life all free from care.

III

A love that is undying,
E'en when the quick pulse grows cold ;
The spirit endless sighing
Will outbreathe its yearnings old ;
And send in still small voices
The unforgotten refrain :
The soul even then rejoices
In watching, loving again.

*THE CRY OF THE DESERTED
ONE*

I

OH, that I had some sweet magical charm,
Some secret and powerful spell
To cast over him who enchants my soul—
Over him whom I love so well.

II

If only a share of the deep, deep throbs
That fill my tumultuous heart,
Were echoed in his to the smallest degree,
To even a thousandth part.

III

Oh, then would it leap with supremest joy,
Then hotly the wildfire would glow ;
Oh, then would the life-stream rush through
my frame,
Which slowly is languishing now !

IV

Ah, there was a time when the whisper of love
Oft came from his lips all unsought ;
But now hath his heart grown cold as the sea,
And my love for him is as naught.

V

Where then shall I find the magical wand,
Or elixir worthy all cost,
To kindle again the fire of his love ;
The love that is doomed to be lost.

VI

Ah, what is my beauty? my empire is gone—
What care I for woman's soft grace,
When he who's my world, my life, and my joy
No longer looks into my face?

VII

No longer dwells he on the sound of my voice
Which he singled from out the world's throng ;
Its music is gone ; 'tis now like the lyre
Whose strings are all broken—unstrung.

VIII

If only its chords were touched by *his* hand
How quick would the vibrating string
Give harmony sweet, for answering love
The lost music would surely bring.

IX

Oh, must I then cherish his image no more,
And banish him ever from sight,
And crush out the love that's sapping my life,
That's turning my day into night?

X

Can the sunflower forget the bright orb of day,
Her idol, her lover confessed?
And oh, can the rose forget the soft dew
That nightly doth fall on her breast?

XI

In the infinite future of love
His spirit will come to my side ;
In the eternity endless I'll gain
That love which on earth he denied.

TO MY BROTHER

I

WHEN Autumn brings the russet leaf,
And Earth is all a-glowing
With colours rich of yellow sheaf
That in the fields are flowing
In waves of beauty, while the air
In gentle zephyrs playing
Makes rhythm in the meadows fair,
And lines of beauty laying.

II

Then Nature's poetry is sung,
For Earth herself is trying
To make her music with sweet tongue
In cadence softly sighing.

'Twas thus in sweetest time of year
A little babe thou camest,
To fill thy niche, and unknown here
On earth a placę thou claimest.

III

And when the harvest moon shines clear ;
With stronger lustre beameth,
Then memory brings thee very near
And at my side thou seemeth
To list, and wonder as before,
When thou to me appealing,
I told thee tales in days of yore,
Of fancy, or of feeling.

IV

But soon I wake and find thee gone ;—
'Twas but a spell of dreaming ;—
I here, thou there, and all alone,
Above the great moon gleaming.
And yearly as the Autumn wanes
My heart would fain be showing
Its love towards thee, and full contains
A measure overflowing.

THE BATTLE OF LIFE

A FAIR young girl with a serious look
Sat pondering deeply over her book ;

And lifting her head in innocent grace
Intently gazed she in her mother's face.

' Oh, what is this " battle of life " ? ' she said,
' Where are the soldiers ? By whom are they led ?

' Our Queen hath her warriors brave, I know,
But what is this army ? Who is their foe ?

' With pennant and plume, and brave array
Are the soldiers dight on the battle-day ?

' With flashing sword and cannon, and lead,
Mow they down the living, heap up the dead ? '

‘ Ah, daughter, the men in the battle of life,
Do not meet on the blood-stained field of strife ;

‘ No sword is seen, nor pennant, nor plume,
Nor rolling thunder of the cannon’s boom ;

‘ Nor charge of rifles, are heard on the plain,
Where combatants struggle for life or gain.

‘ Strange soldiers are some in this battle of life,
The young and the frail ; the widow, and wife ;

‘ Unequal the contest, yet on they go,
Their leader Necessity, Want their foe.

‘ And countless heroes now gone to their rest
Ne’er wore the Victoria Cross on their breast.

‘ More noble than they who have scaled the height
Of some dear ambition, kept well in sight.

‘ Yet the battles fought by these heroes great
Are seldom acknowledged by King or State.

‘ Oh, the garret all bare, and lowly cot
Give shelter to many brave hearts, I wot !

‘ The slim pale youth in his attic high,
Must face this terrible ordeal, or die.

‘ And many a woman shrinks not to yield
Her very heart’s blood on this battle-field.

‘ The strain on her heart, and strain on her brain
Are more than human power can sustain.

‘ The weak and weary soon slip out of sight,
Crushed by the conflict they sink in the fight.

‘ Ah, yes, there are battles fought valiantly
’Neath poverty’s shadow, with none to see.’

She finished ; a pause ; then the quiet air
Was parted by sound of a whispered prayer,

And the fair young girl on her bended knee,
Wept tears at these pictures of misery.

MY CHOICE

I

THE bard may sing of eyes so blue,
And say that none compare,
With their sweet beauty, emblem true
Of all that's good and fair.

II

And others sing of bright dark eyes
That flash 'neath jetty brow,
While each glance with its fellow vies
To make all hearts to bow.

III

But, oh, give me dear kindly eyes
That beam with Love's soft light,
Which throughout ev'ry change ne'er dies,
But gathers depth and might,

IV

With all the long, long, changeful years,
Whose joy now comes, now goes,
And in each chequered phase endears
The hearts wherein it flows.

V

Then give me eyes bright with pure love,
Whose lovelight shines for me ;
And whose sincerity years prove
The truest love to be.

NEW YEAR'S THOUGHTS

I

IN ev'ry moment gliding o'er our heads
Insensibly are woven subtle threads
In life's own garment : year by year
Are tissues fashioned that we needs must wear.

II

And of these robes no two alike are made,
For each hath sep'rate tint of light, or shade,
Some glitter like a rainbow, beauteous, bright,
With pearly hues of everlasting light.

III

And daily we're invested by our deeds,
More real these than all beliefs and creeds,
For good or ill, they never fail to cling
More close to us than any other thing.

IV

And, lo! Our life is numbered, not by days,
Nor counted by the years, but rather by the ways
And actions it hath wrought ; by these alone
The sum of our existence is best shown.

CHRISTMAS

I

OH, Christmas fair, oh, Christmas fair
How sweet thou art to me !
Thy feath'ry flakes of falling snow
That crown each hill and tree,
Like the Spirit of God descend
In silent dove-like guise,
And light upon the hearts of men
To make them pure and wise.

II

I love thee, beauteous, glist'ning snow,
Emblem of Him who came
Clad in the innocence of heaven
To give me His own name.
Love left his 'thereal home,
Love lives with us to-day,
Love fills our hearts with God's own peace,
Love ever lights our way.

WAITING FOR THE FIRST-FOOT

IN the North of England an old custom still prevails of having a first-foot for the New Year. It is supposed that good or bad luck is brought to the inmates of a house by the person who first crosses the threshold in the New Year.

If a female should happen to enter first it is considered an omen of misfortune ; consequently, great care is taken that none but the favoured individual be permitted to go into the house at such a critical time.

The moment the New Year is ushered in, the expected first-foot enters, when he is received with hearty welcome.

In the following verses a poor girl, whose family have been undergoing the trial of trade depression, is awaiting the return of a reconciled lover. He is hastening homewards in order to make his appearance in the capacity of first-foot.

I

THOU'RT passing away from us, grey Old Year,
Thy moments are few and fleeting ;
All spent thy career, thy farewell is near,
For now thy last pulse is beating.

II

Full many a grief thou didst bring, Old Year,
My heart with much sadness steeping,
Yet Hope did appear, and dried the hot tear,
And stayed the long spell of weeping.

III

The poverty-cloud that appeared, Old Year,
Brought its train of miseries, making
So white the brown hair, with sorrow and care
Of mother, whose heart was breaking.

IV

And weaker the little ones grew, Old Year,
Though bravely hunger defying ;
Ah, we had a share of trouble to bear
When little Annie lay dying.

V

I never could hope, relentless Old Year,
 However foolish my dreaming
This night I would wear the smiles of good cheer
 With love-light mine eyes soft beaming.

VI

New gladness hath come to me now, Old Year,
 Instead of that time so weary ;
The longed-for New Year dispels every fear,
 And gone are thy days all dreary.

VII

There's someone returning to me, Old Year,
 Who left me in anger and sorrow ;
But the scalding tear shed over Love's bier
 Will shine as diamonds to-morrow.

VIII

A lucky first-foot is speeding, Old Year,
 As soon as the bells are ringing
To welcome the year, his step I will hear,
 To me a whole life's love bringing.

IX

Come in, oh, come in, with the glad New Year,
My bosom with joy is glowing ;
Ah, yes, he is here, to me now more dear
Than rivers of gold o'erflowing.

MEMORY

I

WHAT art thou Memory, the essence of the
mind ;
Embodiment of all the faculties combined ;
The seat of all the intellect ; the moral throne ;
The lamp that keeps our love alight, when all is
gone ?

II

Thou mausoleum of the heart, in which are
urned
Our dead and buried hopes, those ill-spared joys
that turned
The clouds of life to laughing sunshine, full and
bright,
Whose every ray of bliss converged in one
delight.

III

What subtle necromancy little children own,
'Tis felt in every footstep; 'tis heard in ev'ry
tone!

Its influence still lives, though buried in the grave
Where memory hath laid the dear ones God once
gave.

IV

Within the vault of memory are close entombed
Our dearest, best ambitions, blighted, long since
doomed
To banishment perpetual; yet here they stay
Fair relics of a goal for ever passed away.

V

Oh, memory is crowded with graves of ev'ry
kind;
The broken trust; the stinging wrong that haunts
the mind;
Our wasted love; the false deed done in friendship's
guise;
In this mysterious place each ghostly shadow lies!

VI

What art thou Memory, a vista fair of dreams,
Or, vision of the past in which our fancy teems
With fond illusions of sweet, sunny rose-strewn
 ways,
Crowned with the pearly beauties that belong
 youth's rosy days ?

VII

Along the avenue of Time there rises now
A shining halo whose soft lustre doth endow
One darkened scene with sun, one glaring scene
 with shade
Thus looking down the distance, a pleasing
 glamour's laid.

VIII

And all throughout the way traversed long years
 ago,
Time strews enchantments fair, by which he may
 bestow
A multiple of joys to cover all the pains,
That in the grand sum-total only good remains.

LOVE'S MISERIES

I

OH, how I love thee, how I hate thee,
Often wish thee far away,
And endeavour day by day,
To teach, and charge my heart most straitly
That my love is gone for aye.

II

My heart's emotions beat not even
In their palpitating walls ;
When thy deep voice gently calls
My name in love, 'tis taste of heaven
That thy presence here forestalls.

III

But when I watch thine eyes all roving
O'er the charms of ev'ry fair ;
Like the bee who here and there
Is constant changing, always moving,
Kissing flow'rets ev'rywhere.

IV

And I can see new passion gleaming
In thy face, but not for me,
Naught am I just then to thee ;
Then straightway thousand torments teeming,
Gather round tumultuously.

V

High throbs my heart, but not with gladness,
Moved with pain I know so well,
Filled with hate I cannot quell,
And all the tumult, and the madness
Make it feel a very hell.

VI

Then a weary feeling follows,
And the joy my heart had known
Into black despair is grown,
Full darker than the darkest hollows,
Where the sun no ray hath thrown.

VII

Ah me, the agony of keeping
 Outward calm the livelong night,
 While its balm hath taken flight,
Oh, how my heavy eyes still weeping
 Gladly welcome morning light !

VIII

As limpid spring to parched wayfarer
 Panting in the wilderness,
 So the kisses thou dost press,
And love of which thou art the bearer
 Give new life in one caress.

IX

Impetuous as the torrent's motion
 Towards the vast unbounded sea,
 Dashing by each rock, and tree ;
Such is now my soul's devotion ;
 Wrapped in thee eternally.

THE IRISH MAIDEN'S ADIEU

ON LEAVING ENGLAND

I

WHEN other friends around thee smile
Whom thou hast known for long,
Give one stray thought to her, meanwhile
Who cheered thee with her song,

II

And warbled forth her simple strains
Of chivalry and mirth ;
Whose echo only now remains
To hover round thy hearth.

III

But even shadowy echoes bring
The sweetest recollection,
And Fancy oft will faintly sing
Songs of a rare collection.

IV

And I will conjure in my mind
Sweet thoughts of Love, and Thee,
And music soft, in one combined ;
Love's surest, truest key,

V

And carry back to Erin's shore
A new and thrilling theme,
Wherewith to warble out once more
The melody I dream.

VI

And as the lark 'twixt earth and heaven
Doth trill its joyous song,
So from my inmost soul are given
Its breathings all day long.

VII

Thus full of happy thought I'll go
Bright as the gladsome day,
And as the streamlet loves to flow
Make music all the way.

VIII

Soft murmuring sounds that sweetly fill
The heart with new delight,
Like dancing, rippling, glitt'ring rill
That flows down rocky height.

IX

Oh, Erin, land of sun and dew,
Thou spreadst a spell o'er me,
And tender yearnings spring anew
That draw my heart towards thee!

X

Thou land of trefoil emerald green !
Thou land of daisied turf !
Thou land of waters bright, whose sheen
Gleams 'midst white-crested surf !

XI

Ah, Ireland, country ever dear,
Thy beauties now recall,
Thy sorrows even while still here
And tears unbidden fall !

XII

As dreams of loved and long-lost dead
Whose memories we keep,
So homes whose joys are ever fled,
Their solitude I weep.

XIII

But, ah, why should mine eyes be dewed
With tears which dull their light ?
Begone from me such mournful mood
My smile shall e'er be bright.

XIV

My song shall henceforth be of mirth ;
My lay of truest love ;
My ardent soul shall e'en give birth
To strains that all hearts move.

XV

Tho' fairer face thy heart shall gain
When I am gone from thee ;
Ah, then, let memory still retain
One sweet, stray thought for me.

XVI

And as night spreads her softening shade
O'er earth, and sky, and sea,
Remember her the Celtic maid
Who loves, but must leave thee.

THE SAILOR'S SONG

I

OVER the breezy, rippling sea
We sailors merrily go,
With all our canvas spread so free,
While gaily we shout—'Yah, ho !'

II

None so merry as we, and light,
The rolling sea our world,
All gilded by a sun so bright,
That gleams on the sails unfurled.

III

We have perils, God knows, our fill,
But why should we feel alarm ?
Duty and Love inspire our will,
Give the courage to our arm.

IV

Over us the resistless storm
 Low, our gallant ship would lay ;
Our head is cool, as heart is warm,
 And safely plough we our way.

V

True, there are times when all unsought,
 Welling upwards to our mind,
There come great waves of yearning thought,
 For the dear ones left behind :

VI

Though the wide, wide ocean may part
 The mariner from his home,
Still, constant and true is his heart,
 Wherever his ship may roam.

VII

Over the breezy, rippling sea
 We sailors merrily go,
With all our canvas spread so free,
 While gaily we shout—‘Yah, ho!’

TO JAMES WATSON SEWELL

BORN MARCH 31

(*Acrostic*)

J UST as boisterous, blust'ring March is dumb,
 A nd knoweth full well that his hour hath come ;
 (M erry made he in his wild, wilful glee,
 E ncircling the valley, and bending the tree ;
 S miling and scowling by turns now did he
 W in the good-will of the frost-bound Earth,
 A s she opens her arms to welcome the birth,
 T hat brings her soft showers, and sunshine, and
 flowers;)

S o thou wisely waited not the few hours
 O f dying-out March ; thy Fate safely rules
 N ot to let thy *début* come on Day of All Fools.
 S ecuring a star more lucky to shine
 E ver upon thee with soft rays divine.
 W hen Night spreads her veil all over the sky,
 E ven then thy good star, tho' hidden from eye,
 L ights its lustrous lamp ; for thee surely burns,
 L oving and watching and warning by turns.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

TOO MODEST BY FAR

A KISS-IN-THE-RING INCIDENT

(Ballade)

THE ring was formed, a pretty sight
To see the maidens dark, and fair
Stand blushing, and pretending flight,
And make-believe the kisses were
Too much for modesty to bear ;
And yet they slyly wished for one ;
And each girl longed her turn was there
To give a kiss when fairly won.

Among the merry group that night
A bashful swain refused to share
The blisses that were his by right ;
To take a kiss he could not dare,
Before the world, and gaslight glare,
'Twere sacrilege in sight of sun !
' And, still,' he thought, ' why need I care
To give a kiss when fairly won ?'

So with good courage, manly might,
He took his place with jaunty air,
And gazed around on maidens bright ;
But mercy ! ere he was aware,
Some sadly mischievous betrayer
The kerchief dropped at him in fun ;
Oh, where his brave resolves, oh, where,
To give a kiss when fairly won ?

O'erwhelmed he sank on nearest chair ;
The cannon's mouth he might not shun,
On woman's lips 'twere harder far,
To give a kiss when fairly won.

*FRIENDSHIP**(Ballade)*

I THOUGHT thee friendship all divine,
I worshipped thee as a being fair ;
My heart I made thy living shrine,
I was thy slave, and I would dare
All things to do without one care.
I saw thee with enchanted eyes,
But now those eyes are opened—there—
Ah, me, is too much friendship wise ?

Why should I waste this heart of mine
On tinkling brass or empty ware ?
No longer will I wish and pine
For that which is by far too rare.
Ingratitude is hard to bear,
And cold neglect from those you prize ;
Experience says each passing year
' Ah, me, is too much friendship wise ? '

And is this Nature's best design
That human love be poor and bare,
And must my heart itself resign
To the ascetic's cold despair?
True faith be found not anywhere—
No kindred soul to sympathise?
I would myself this question spare—
' Ah, me, is too much friendship wise? '

ENVOIE

Oh, Friendship, fickle, light as air,
I'm still thy slave to idolise ;
The cynic's wisdom I'll not share,—
Nor ask—' Is too much friendship wise? '

THE MONKEYS

(A LECTURE)

IN Holy Writ it is enjoined
That men should love their brothers ;
I trust this lesson on your part
You learn with all the others.

For men and monkeys are the same
The scientists now tell us ;
If this be true, we sure must treat
The monkeys as our fellows.

The structure of their tender frame
You cannot help from seeing,
Essentially is just the same
As that of human being.

They grin, they squabble, steal, and learn
Tricks that are very naughty ;
And if you gave cigar and cane,
Like gents they'd grow quite haughty.

Whate'er the difference may be
'Twixt man and little monkey,
I cannot see, no more than 'Tit'
Saw in her darling donkey.

She loved him well, she led him forth
To sylvan, leafy bowers ;
She beauty saw in his long ears,
And wooed him with bright flowers.

'Tis true 'tis but a fairy scene
Imaginative feeling
Doth spread before us, yet we know
With real life 'tis dealing.

How many a woman good and fair,
Intelligent and clever,
A donkey for her idol makes,
And worships him for ever.

And if one raised the sorcerer's veil
That Cupid's ever casting
Before her eyes ; though clear she sees,
She loves to everlasting.

And thus the world goes round and round,
And matches human beings ;
Strange incongruities are found,
And all by Fate's decreeings.

THE MAIDEN'S CHOICE

OR, THE AMERICAN GIRL IN ENGLAND

OH, she was fair, as fair could be ;
Her step was light, and quick, and free ;
Her golden hair shone with bright hue,
And roses bloomed 'neath eyes so blue.

Oh, whom will this fair maiden wed,
This maiden with the buoyant tread ;
Oh, whom will she in wedlock take,
Whom now will she her husband make ?

How earnestly the young man wooed
And for her hand he warmly sued ;
His words of deep and faithful love
A maiden's heart must surely move.

Oh, she should be his star so bright,
Filling his home with 'thereal light ;
His heart's own idol ; his desire,
Of whom his soul could never tire.

' His goddess fair,' he said, ' his life,'—
All merged in one sweet title—' wife.'
His aim her happiness on earth,
If she would share his home and hearth.

The maiden listened for a while,
Then turned away with coldest smile,
She told him she preferred to be
Just as she was, with fancy free.

He went his way, only to dream
That she was good as she did seem,
But, oh, his heart was very full,
And all the world seemed cold and dull,

For want of her whose beauteous face
He thought endowed with ev'ry grace ;
He hoped 'twas but a passing whim
This anguish deep had laid on him.

And then another suitor came,
Whose wealth was his untarnished name,
Unblemished was through life his path,
But riches none, alas, he hath !

In this case too, the maid proved coy,
And firm refused to be his joy ;
Her virgin heart no man could gain,
'Twas clear a maid she must remain.

And so he had his way to wend,
With hopes the maid might still unbend ;
His bosom burned with Love's true fire,
In truth, she was his heart's desire.

And many suitors came and went,
But unto none the maiden meant
To plight her troth, to give her hand,
For that which she did most demand,

These lovers had not to bestow ;
However much their hearts might glow
With honest love ; she little cares
If gold and riches are not theirs.

‘ Oh, back to the New World, I’ll hie !’
Cried she with disappointed sigh.
‘ The boasted beauties of your isle
I guess, my fancy can’t beguile.’

There was a something in that voice
Which one would hardly like from choice ;
A tone peculiar to that land
Which by Atlantic winds is fanned.

At length a period to her stay
Was fixed upon, and soon the day
Of her departure drew full near,
Which scarcely brought one single tear,

And scarce she felt one small regret
At leaving the kind friends she’d met ;
Her visit here ’twas plain to see
Was sorry failure as could be,

When another, and a better lover
Around her path began to hover ;
He told her that his heart was hers ;
And now no longer she demurs,

For he lays before her glist'ning eyes
Vast piles of shining gold which lies,
In rich profusion at her feet,
Where he has taken lowly seat.

' All—all, my darling, to be thine
If only thou wilt be but mine !'
Cried he with fervour and delight,
While love made his dim eyes grow bright.

His grizzly beard, and scanty hair
Had seen full many a passing year,
Old age had touched him on the shoulder,
But that was naught, since oft he told her,

That without doubt all he possessed
Should sure be hers, if he were blest
With her as his own darling wife,
Tho' albeit his span of life,

Was somewhat narrow and confined,
But wealth and love, these two combined,
Would cover any want so small,
As that of youth, which after all,

Is merely an imagination
Compared to money and high station.
What woman would such good refuse !
'Twere tempting Fate such luck to lose !

And so the maid was quite convinced,
The matter now no longer minced,
Accepted him who thus had wooed her,
And took the money and the suitor.

Her lot since then, I dare not say ;
I only know that every day
She wishes either she, or he,
Were gone to bliss eternally.

A LETTER

(WRITTEN IN A DRAUGHTY ROOM)

WITHOUT the snow lies on the ground ;
 Within the wind doth play
Upon my back, and all around
 (Thou know'st its little way).

My fingers stiffen as I write
 In this too airy place,
For sundry draughts now take their flight,
 And rise from feet to face.

They settle on my shoulders chill ;
 They run adown my spine,
Ah, how can I this letter fill
 Or make another sign ?

Thou know'st full well the truth of this,
For often thou didst swear,
When zephyrs bold thy cheek would kiss,
And take thee unaware.

And then, perchance, an ugly sneeze,
Would screw thy visage fair,
And almost bring thee on thy knees ;
(A posture now so rare.)

Now write me, write me, son of mine,
The pages long and sweet,
And let each goodly, newsy line
Be ample, full, complete.

The overflowing measure mete
Beyond what thou dost owe ;
Then I'll peruse each covered sheet,
Recounting how things go.

Skimp not the herald mute, that speaks
Of all that comes to thee ;
That tells the doings of past weeks
So truthfully to me.

And when thou sittest down to think
In calm and quiet mood,
Just take the handy pen and ink,
And chronicle what's good.

And on the virgin paper pour
The fruit of thoughtful mind ;
Something that we may ponder o'er,
With sense and love combined.

The utterance of the soul is thus
Embalmed, and ever near,
It is thyself who speaks to us,
Although no longer here.

A VALENTINE

THE FATE OF THE FLATTERER

THERE is a sure unerring law—
A part of Nature's plan,
That what man giveth unto maids,
Maids render back to man.

For men's duplicity they yield
Their mighty scorn in full,
And with severity tenfold
His character they pull,

Remorselessly to pieces small,
Until the very shreds,
Would take full countless pairs of hands,
To gather up the threads.

The man who tells each girl he meets
‘She’s fairest of her sex,’
In course of time will surely find,
He flatters but to vex.

What is the worth of honeyed phrase,
That’s given to all around ?
It bears no meaning when ’tis known
To be but empty sound.

But retribution comes at length,
No woman wants his praise,
There’s not a maid in all the world
Believes a word he says.

REFLECTIONS OF A STUDENT

WHEN queerest problems rack my brain,
And give me infinite of pain,
That sure I feel I'm near insane
As madman.

I sit, and think, and read, and pore,
And go on wondering more and more
While conning ' methods ' o'er and o'er,
Till heart-sick.

I wonder if my genius rare
Will ever the round circle square,
And make my work beyond compare
Of mortal.

My mind disturbed and ill at ease,
Sweet satisfaction none it sees,
For all prove vain soliloquies,
And worthless.

At length my temper grows quite hot,
For I declare the thing 'all rot,'
And to my dear tobacco-pot
I turn me.

My pipe, what consolation kind
I ever in thy incense find !
It soothes and cheers my troubled mind
Most sweetly.

Ah, what care I for love and kisses ?
My heart such transport never misses
Nor ever seeks those tender blisses,
To cheer it.

When sober, thoughtful, walking through
The green fields decked with diamond dew,
I take my one companion true,
And love it.

Yes, to my lips I press the shank
As seated on a sloping bank
I smoke amidst its grasses rank
Quite happy.

Now, I'll be wedded by-and-by,
But not to woman—no—not I ;
'Twill be to pipe and brown birdseye.
I'm mated.

*LINES ON A LADY'S PORTRAIT
PAINTED ON AN ASH-TRAY*

(ADDRESSED TO ITS OWNER)

I

SAY canst thou on this brow so rare
So beauteous, pure, and smooth, and fair ;
Or on this cheek of damask rose
The ashes from thy weed dispose ?

II

Though fragrant it may seem to thee ;
Delightful to the senses be,
Yet couldst thou to so base a use
Put this sweet face, if thou mightst choose ?

III

While balancing thy cigarette
Like any little vain coquette ;
Methinks I see thee gazing now
Upon that white, and spotless brow,

IV

And wishing that its owner were
Enscenced not too far from thy chair ;
And in her sunny eyes of brown
Watch the reflection of thine own.

V

But what's the use of speculation,
Or making this vain calculation,
Upon a piece of painted china
Which represents the face of Nina ?

VI

Now cover o'er those features bright,
With veil of ashes thin and white,
And put that sweet face out of sight,
While wishing it a fond ' Good-night ! '

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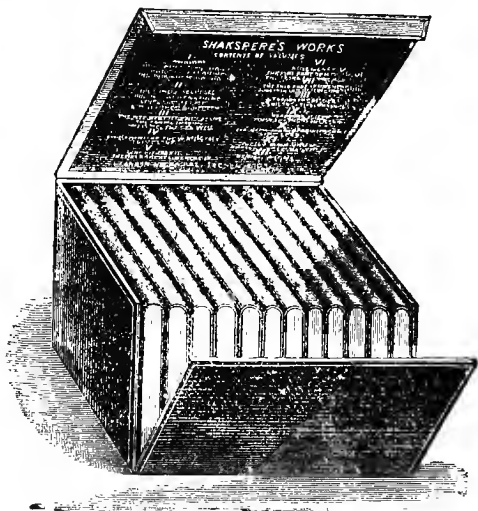


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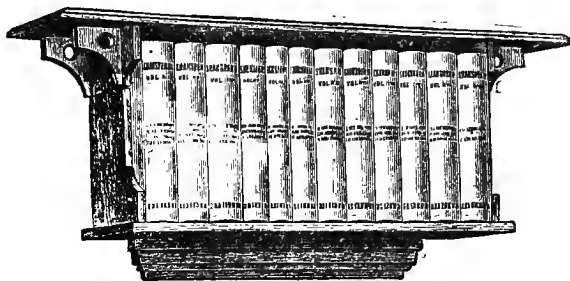
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ACT I

Salar. My wind, cooling my broth,
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew, dock'd in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanc'd would make me sad?
But tell not me : I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Ant. Believe me, no : I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place ; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year :
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant. Fie, fie !

Salar. Not in love neither ? Then let us say you
are sad,

Because you are not merry ; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed

Janus,

Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time :
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper ;
And other of such vinegar aspect

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